

The Greatest Is Love

1 Corinthians 13:13

Divine love is the conquering power in a world of hatred, strife and selfishness. It can do what no other virtue can do, and, in that sense, it is the king of the graces.

God's love repays abuse with kindness. It prays for mercy for its executioners. It acts unselfishly when all around are clamouring for their rights. It gives, until it can give no more.

An Indian was driving his elephant along the street, goading it continually to increase its speed. Suddenly that steel goad slipped from his hand, tumbling with a loud clang to the pavement.

The elephant swung around, picked up the goad with its trunk, and held it out to the master. Love is like that.

Sir Walter Scott once threw a stone at a stray dog with such power and accuracy that it broke the dog's leg. As Scott stood there remorsefully, the dog limped up to him and licked the hand that had thrown the rock. Love is like that.

A man called Stanton hurled bitter invective at Abraham Lincoln, calling him a "low cunning clown" and "the original gorilla." He said that anyone would be foolish to go to Africa to see a gorilla when there was one in Springfield, USA.

Lincoln turned the other cheek. In fact, he later appointed Stanton as War Minister, insisting he was the most qualified man for the job.

When Lincoln was shot dead, Stanton stood by his lifeless body, and wept openly saying, “There lies the greatest ruler of man the world has ever seen.” Lincoln had conquered by turning the other cheek. Love is like that.

E. Stanley Jones wrote, “By turning the other cheek you disarm your enemy. He hits you on the cheek and you, by your moral audacity, hit him on the heart by turning the other cheek.

“His enmity is dissolved. Your enemy is gone. You get rid of your enemy by getting rid of your hatred.

“The world is at the feet of the Man Jesus Christ Who had power to strike back but Who also had power **not** to strike back. This is power --- the ultimate power.”

Sometimes it may seem that more can be accomplished by speaking the harsh word, by repaying tit for tat and by standing up for one’s rights. These methods do have a certain amount of power.

But the balance of power is on the side of divine love, because, instead of deepening hostility, love changes enemies into friends. What a powerful witness!

By CBR

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