



The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

O GOD, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As an introduction, I will quote a fellow that I am not so fond of quoting – myself! This is taken from my Sunday Sermon opening remarks: *“The Prayer of Collect for this day stresses a very distinct and singular element of our faith – LOVE! Love of God has a fundamental dependence upon FAITH. If we do not know or believe that someone, or something, exists, love for that person or thing cannot exist. Of course we could further narrow the field to a ‘person’ since we cannot truly love a ‘thing’ though we may be very fond of it. Our degree of love for God is directly proportional to our degree of faith. The greater the faith, the more intense the love!”*

Pervasive of all Scripture is the fact that this material life is fleeting – in fact, no more than a vapor according to St. James: *“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”* (James 4:14) The prophet Isaiah compares the days of our lives on earth to grass that dries up and withers away: *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”* (Isaiah 40:7-8) A man who is lacking the burning Spirit of God in his heart might be dismayed by these verses, but not the Child of God who is well aware of his future disposition in God's Heaven. *O GOD, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding* It is true that we may be unknowing of the magnitude of joy that we shall have with our Lord, but we can be sure that it surpasses any joy we have ever before experienced – even the joy of a mother at the birth of a beautiful and healthy child.

What is it that qualifies us for this joy which the Lord has prepared for us? Is it

faith only? No, it is not faith alone for devil's, too, "*believe and tremble*". (James 2:19) Then what is it, and what kind of faith? It is the kind of faith that binds us to God in love. Love is the cement and faith is the essence. Our earthly life is a temporary state (as all can attest who have lost so many of their loved ones to the last sleep). Though life is a temporary state, LOVE is FOREVER. LOVE is one perpetual resource that we can possess both in Heaven and on earth! Love is not subject to expiration or death. The cement of LOVE is the very fabric of Heaven. *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 8:38-39) This is the strongest witness we can bring to the subject – the Word of God. But note, that the required response of faith is LOVE of God. He loves those who have reciprocated His own love towards us! Does He love us because we came to love Him before His love was manifested to us? NO! *We love him, because he first loved us.* (1 John 4:19) The purpose of hymns is to teach us greater doctrine – so long as the hymn is Scriptural. Do you remember this lovely old hymn?

O How I Love Jesus

*There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
it sounds like music in my ear,
the sweetest name on earth.*

*Refrain:
O how I love Jesus,
O how I love Jesus,
O how I love Jesus,
because he first loved me!*

*It tells me of a Savior's love,
who died to set me free;
it tells me of his precious blood,
the sinner's perfect plea.
(Refrain)*

*It tells of one whose loving heart
can feel my deepest woe;
who in each sorrow bears a part
that none can bear below.
(Refrain)*

Love is such a powerful force even when saddled with this frail flesh we presently occupy. Mothers have been known to exhibit super human strength in saving their babies from some threatened danger. If human love is that powerful, what do you suppose can be the measure of Godly LOVE? Well, then, what is the source of all Love? Isn't it the Fountainhead of love in God? Has He not imbued our hearts and souls with a love that we could never own without Him? *Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire.* The strength of the Collects of the Prayer Book is their absolute reliance on Holy Scripture for the truth they profess - much like the classical hymns of the Church.

Our love for God is not even our own – it is granted us and supplied to our hearts by the gracious God of our Salvation. Our hearts, being filled with the spirits of Love, become like an overflowing fountain of love but, in a more real sense, very much like a *“cup that runneth over”* with love. (see Psalms 23:5b). The Fountain Source is God, the Cup is our own hearts being replenished moment by moment. With the eye of the heart focused in unwavering concentration on the object of our Love, we will see the work of God in the weakness of a hungry child, the hopeless and struggling widow, the righteous one in prison. It is true because God’s love flows through all of these conditions of life. If we will enjoy the benefits that God has prepared for us, we must be destined to the dwelling place and Source of all Love – God our Father in Jesus Christ. Loving God above all other things, we will love that which He loves and adores. Did we not change the things we love most when we fell in love with the darling of our hearts? Did we not turn our love toward those things that were the object of that darling’s affections - the Princess of our hearts, or our Knight in Shining Armor? How much more must we love those things which are filled with the Fountain of God’s Love?

The Love of God was hidden in the folk tales and stories of our ancestors. One such story of the Brothers Grimm – **Sleeping Beauty** – tells of a beautiful princess who fell asleep never again to awaken until kissed by the handsome young Prince. That Sleeping Beauty may represent the Church (which has been poisoned and fallen asleep in our day), and the Prince, Jesus Christ. He will come to awaken His Church in Love before the ruin is too advanced. So we need not lose hope, but persevere on the line of battle. At the moment of decision, the love of God shall be made manifest by a parting of the heavens, and the clarion call of the Trumpet of God. Our flagging armies shall experience a renewed vigor by the Armies that descend from Heaven led by the Captain of our souls. Victory shall be certain. Then shall all things be made sure for the people of God.