

The Greatest of These! 01

A Discourse by Darrio Taylor on 1 Corinthians 13: 06/ 2015

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” John 14:21.

I invite you to kneel and pray with me as we open the Scriptures.

Eternal Father which art in heaven; we come to You in Jesus’ name, and we thank You that You have gathered us to this holy convocation. It is the appointed means of heaven that during these meeting You desire to pour upon us Thy Holy Spirit in the former and latter rain power. We pray that as we open the Sacred Scriptures that You would open our understanding. We pray that You would help us to understand the moral purpose of prophecy that we might be able to reflect the lovely image of Jesus fully and that we might be able to bear the glad tidings of salvation to the ends of the world. Thank You for hearing and answering our prayers, in Jesus name Amen.

This series is entitled Lessons from 1 Corinthians 13.

“The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless” (RH July 21, 1904). {6BC 1091.2, 3}

So we have been counseled that we have to read this chapter everyday so that we are to take the lessons of Christlike love, of sanctified heaven born love into the home of our hearts. Without Christlike love all other qualifications are worthless.

“In the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians the apostle Paul defines true Christlike love. . . . This chapter is an expression of the obedience to all who love God and keep His commandments. It is brought into action in the life of every true believer.” (Letter 156, 1900). {6BC 1091.3}

We are talking of true Christlike love that will bring us in obedience of all of God’s Ten Commandments. So for this reason it’s going to be our desire to study this chapter text by text and verse by verse that we may learn the lessons of true sanctified, heaven born love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. (3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. (4) Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, (5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; (6) Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; (7) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (8) Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. (10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (11) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a

child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. (12) For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (13) And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Our first presentation is entitled 'Sounding Brass or Tinkling Cymbal'. Let's begin to study verse one together: "Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels." What does the apostle Paul mean when he talks about the tongues of men and of angels? We will get the Bible context on 'the tongues of men'.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22 "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. (22) Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."

We understand that in the early apostolic church, the church of Pentecost, Ephesus we realize that God bestowed upon the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit when they were on one accord, of one mind and one heart and one spirit. How did the Holy Spirit manifested itself on Acts 2? Remember the cloven tongues of fire came upon them and sat upon each and every one of them and they begin to speak with other tongues or other languages as the spirit gave them utterance. And we know that this was for the purpose of preaching the gospel; for being able to carry the triumphs of the cross and the plan of salvation to every creature under heaven.

Verse 21 says: "In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord."

When Paul says 'in the law it is written' that lets us know that what he is describing here comes from an Old Testament passage. There is a scriptural prophecy here that the giving of the gifts of different languages was actually a fulfillment of prophecy. This is taken from a very well-known passage to many as a method of correct Bible interpretation and explanation.

Isaiah 28:9-11 "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (10) For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: (11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people."

Verse 11 this is where Paul was drawing from when he was describing the tongues of men, the gift of languages for being able to communicate the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to other nations besides the Jews, even to the Jews who were scattered to the different nations abroad.

Isaiah 28:12 "To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear."

When we study the Spirit of Prophecy we know when she describes that term 'refreshing', we know it's connected with the latter rain and the former or early rain. So here the Bible is letting us know that when the gift of different languages was given to the apostles, this was the beginning of what we know as the former rain, and this was so that the message of salvation could be carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

Isaiah 28:13 "But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

So it's the word of God that's taught 'precept upon precept and line upon line'. So even though the refreshing will be given in the former rain, the early rain on the day of the Pentecost, the disciples were able to acquire foreign languages different from their mother-tongue where they were born, it says,

“Yet they still would not hear”. So in reference to 1 Corinthians 13: “Though I speak with the tongues of men”, I can receive the gifts of the Spirit and have different languages and various abilities and capabilities so that I can communicate the truth for this time. And also, “Though I speak with the tongues of angels”. Now what are the tongues of angels? We know that the tongues of men are the different foreign languages; The German language, the Chinese language, the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and so many other languages. What are the ‘tongues of angels’; the language of angels?

Revelation 14:6-7 “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, (7) Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

In Revelation 14 we have the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the First, Second and Third Angel’s Messages. Now we know that these are not literal angels; God does not commission literal angels to preach the gospel to the fallen men; but we recognize that these angels actually represent messengers. They represent evangelists or teachers, colporteurs, medical missionary workers, bible instructors that have been sanctified by the truth, receive these messages in their order and they give them to the world. But in the Old Testament times and even in the New Testament, God would commission angels to bring messages of prophecy, messages of dreams, visions and revelations to communicate them to God’s messengers that they might give them to the Church. Let’s look at one of those angels in Luke 1. The language of angels is the language of prophecy, visions and dreams that symbolize the work of the Everlasting Gospel.

Luke 1:19 “And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.”

Why did God send Gabriel to Zacharias as he was in the temple performing his duties as high priest to burn incense? Gabriel was sent to bring him glad tidings. The question is, what are glad tidings Gabriel, the angel of Prophecy, the same angel that visited Daniel in Babylon, and John on the isle of Patmos, and also Zechariah the prophet as he was in Babylonian exile and coming to Medo-Persia?

Romans 10:15 “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

So what are the glad tidings of good things? It is the gospel message; notice that the gospel of peace represents the glad tidings of good things. So when the angel came to Zacharias and gave him the glad tidings he was opening up to him the gospel, but he came to bring up to him a prophecy concerning Elijah, and we know that it was Zacharias’ son who was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah. This message was given even before John was born. It was a prophecy, showing the relationship between the gospel and prophecy. Prophecy is the foretelling of the gospel in advance, and when the gospel is preached, it causes us to go back to look in prophecy, so we see this message is something that God has already designed in the past, but He foretells it before it comes to pass, so that when it comes to pass we might believe.

Daniel 11 is the Third Angel’s Message in the last days, we know that it is going to be a message based upon prophecy, and we understand that it is also the tidings as well, because the tidings are the gospel. In Daniel 11 we see the final gospel going to the world prior to Michael standing up, and of course when Michael stands up everybody’s probation is going to be decided, either having the Seal of God or having the Mark of the Beast.

Daniel 11:44-45 "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. (45) And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

This is a particular and specific gospel, in fact it tells you that it comes from the east and the north, God is narrow it down that we don't mistake what this gospel message is. So we have recognized that the language of the angels is the message of prophecy; we are talking about the books of Daniel and Revelation. The tidings out of the east and out of the north is going to be the swelling of the Loud Cry, that which identifies Babylon and her fall and brings a people out from her, and yet it will bring a time of trouble such as never was, There's going to be great persecution because of these tidings from the east and from the north.

Paul is saying, "Though, I speak with the tongues of men", I can receive the former rain and the latter rain that I might have the gifts of the Spirit, I can even speak the language of angels, which is the Three Angel's Messages and more specifically, I can have the message of Daniel 11:40-45, the final tidings of the east and the north to be given to the world before Christ comes. But if I have not charity it says I am nothing.

What is charity? According to the passage in the Spirit of Prophecy, we know charity is sanctified, heaven born love; it is Christlike love that leads us to obey all the commandments of God. But let's get a biblical definition for charity here.

Ephesians 5:1-2 "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

Now in verse two we have all the components of charity, because that word 'love' in the Greek Strong's concordance, that word is 'agape'; "Affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast:--(feast of) charity(-ably), dear, love." it is the same word as charity, but notice how it is described:

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself."

Notice this love leads one to give themselves; "For us an offering and a sacrifice....." In other words charity is self-sacrificing love. The Bible is clear that Jesus was fully obedient to the will of his Father. How obedient was He? Even unto death. What death did Jesus experience? The death of the Cross, Philippians 2:8. So in other words charity is self-sacrificing love that leads to be obedient to God's commandments, and in order to insure our obedience we're going to die the death of the cross, or in other words we are to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we do not crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts daily, then there is no way Christ can be in us; no way we can have the Holy Spirit; no way we can have self-sacrificing love. It is the love that says, "You must die to self, you must renounce yourself, you must crucify pride, selfishness and love of the world in order to obey My commandments."

That is the type of charity that 1 Corinthians 13 is talking about; if we don't have that, we can have the gifts of the Spirit, I can have the former and the latter rain to do ministry, I can speak the language of the Three Angels, the message of Daniel 11:40-45, but if I don't have charity, self-sacrificing love, I become as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal.

What did the apostle mean by sounding brass or tinkling cymbal? Is it possible to have the gift of the Spirit for the purpose of doing ministry and understand the prophetic message of the hour which is Daniel 11:40-45, the fullness of the third angel's messages but yet be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal? Now this sounding brass is dealing with a loud noise of confusion and perplexity. A Loud Cry that produces confusion and perplexity.

How would you like it if we bring some big cymbals here and begin to clash on those cymbals and begin to bring about confusion and perplexity, would that be nice in your ears? Would you want to hear a message like that? In other words when you hear the sounding brass the noise of confusion and perplexity, when you hear it brings annoyance and irritation to the point that you say: "I don't want to hear that. I know it's the language of men and of angels but it sounds like sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, I don't want to hear that." It causes one to close up their ears, even though you are preaching the Three Angel's Messages; even though you are sharing the books of Daniel and Revelation.

We want to look at brass in the Bible in the negative sense. What is the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal? You are preaching the Tree Angel's, you've received the gifts of the Spirit, but you don't have charity, you don't have the fruit of the Spirit. In fact charity is the crowning fruit of the Spirit, which we will see when we study Peter's ladder. The last attribute of the fruit of the Spirit, of the divine nature is charity. When you get to the top of the ladder you know that you have reached it when you have charity, along with brotherly kindness, along with godliness, patience, temperance, knowledge, virtue and Faith. Faith is the bottom of the ladder when you climb to the top and reach your final destination, you will have charity at the end. If you don't have that, then your message will be sounding brass and tinkling cymbal even if it is Daniel and Revelation, even if it is the truths from Habakkuk's tables. When people hear you saying these things it's sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, because you don't have self-sacrificing love.

Isaiah 48:3-5 "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. (4) Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; (5) I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them."

So notice verse 4 and 5 speaks about iron and brass; God says you are 'obstinate'. Obstinate means to be stubborn, hard-hearted, it means to have a stiff neck. Remember God would often talk about His people that have stiff necks, stretched forth necks and hard necks, and what is it that makes them so obstinate? It's their idols, it's their graven images, it's their molten images. So in other words brass here is talking of somebody who is an idolater, and their idolatry leads them in spirit and character to be obstinate, to be stubborn, to be stiff necked, to be hard-hearted. And it's interesting that it says your brow is brass; where in anatomy is our brow? Right on your forehead, now notice the obstinacy, the heart hardness, the stubbornness is right in our forehead, our mind.

Brass so far represents obstinacy, stubbornness, hardness of heart, stiff neck; it is describing somebody who is in rebellion, somebody who is an idolater. An idol worshipper looks to their idols and molten image and graven images and they don't trust in the living God.

Jeremiah 6:28-30 "They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. (29) The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. (30) Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them."

So notice verse 28, it talks about iron and brass again, but it talks about those that are grievous revolters. Notice they are walking with slanders, they are all corrupt. In fact verse 29 says that the founder or the refiner, the gold smith or the blacksmith, the one trying to refine and purify these metals, it says you are purified and melted in vain because your wickedness is not taken away. In other words the brass and the iron, those that are slanderers, those that are corrupt, these are the ones that do not submit to the refining process. They are very rebellious, they are revolters it says, and as a result God is

going to reject them as reprobate silver. Revolters, corrupters and slanders are brass and iron, they are never purged, they are never cleansed, and their wickedness is never melted no matter how much fire, no matter how much trial they go under. It doesn't do them any good, because their wickedness is right there after the fires have gone by them. They are incorrigible; they are incapable of reforming and God is going to reject them as reprobate silver.

Isaiah 1:2-4 "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. (3) The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. (4) Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."

So notice the rebellious condition, those that are corrupt, those that walk with slanders, the Bible is clear that they have no intelligence, they don't know who the true God is. The animals are smarter than them. The Bible says they're a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity; seed of evil doers, the children of corrupters they have gone away backwards, they forsaken the Lord and they have provoked Him to anger.

Isaiah 1:5-6 "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. [6] From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

We are talking of the iron and brass; they are diseased from head to toe with all these sores, wounds, bruises, putrefying it stinks; it smells, it is hideous; this is leprosy. And they refuse to be corrected the more you correct them, the more they revolt, the more they go away backward, because they're corrupt, a seed of evil doers, a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, this is the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal.

Jeremiah 9:1-4 "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! [2] Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. [3] And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord . [4] Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders."

Again this is the characteristics of the brass, remember the brass they're all corrupt, they all walk with slanders, they are all revolters; they've forsaken the Lord and gone away backwards.

Jeremiah 9:5-8 "And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. [6] Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord . [7] Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? [8] Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait."

So here they walk with slanders, they're all adulterers, they're all treacherous; the Bible says they train their tongues to be as bows and arrows, they shot out lies and they won't speak the truth. They proceed from evil to evil and they refuse to know Me. They don't want to know God, with their mouth they

speaking peace to their neighbor but in their heart they're trying to catch them, trying to hunt them, they're trying to set up a snare for them. Jeremiah said, "O, that I had a place in the wilderness that I could separate from my people, all adulterers, all treacherous, they're all brass." They're all the iron, slanderers, speaking lies, revolting and won't speak the truth, but they have made their tongue into a bow and arrow of lies and deception.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. Idolatry, rebellion, stubbornness, corruption, walking with slanders, speaking lies, not speaking truth, this is all dealing with our character. In other words of we can have the human and divine message of the Three Angel's and of the gospel of salvation, but in my character I can be sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, if I don't have charity which is self-sacrificing love.

Psalm 50:15-16 "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. [16] But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?"

Who are the wicked that actually declares God's statutes and will take God's covenant in their mouth? This can't be the worldling; this can't be the pagan or the unbeliever that doesn't profess Christ. The wicked here is speaking of somebody who will declare God's statutes; they don't mind preaching God's covenant and preaching the truth; they have no problem with that. The reason why God is saying this to the wicked; "Why do you take my covenant, why do you declare my statutes?" It is in verse 17.

Psalm 50:17 "Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee."

Now how can you in one breath speak God's words, His statutes and His covenant, but then on the other side, you hate instruction and you are casting His words behind the back? What are those words do you think, that are words of instruction but are thrown behind? In other words you don't mind speaking the tongues of men and of angels, you don't mind speaking of the Three Angels and speaking about Daniel and Revelation, but then when it comes to those words that brings instruction, that brings counsel, that bring about reform, you don't want to hear those words. In other words it's the instruction of practical godliness and Christian living, those are the things that you don't want to hear.

So we are coming to God's Word like a spiritual salad buffet, where you pick and choose what you want. You say, "I will have some lettuce, but not tomatoes; I will have carrots, but not onions, and no celery; that is not how God's Word is. If we are going to take God's Word, we have to take everything in the salad bar, as it were. We have to take it all; we can't pick and choose what we want to focus on and what we want to preach on. We preach on those things we are comfortable with, but those words that have instruction that rebuke us and deal with our character defects; we cast that behind our back. We don't want to hear that. Notice what God says:

Psalm 50:18 "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers."

Notice; we are talking about somebody who declares God's statutes, they take God's covenant on their mouth, but He says, "When you saw a thief you consented with him, you partake with adulterers." Who would have thought that you can preach the truth, and yet be found in company with thieves and adulterers?

Psalm 50:19 "Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit."

Is there something wrong with this? In one breadth you're preaching God's statutes and his covenant, then in another breadth you're giving your mouth to evil and your tongue frameth deceit. Is there

something wrong there? You see this is what Paul meant; when I am speaking with the tongues of men and angels, but without charity my message becomes sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Psalm 50:20 "Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son."

This is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

Psalm 50:21-23 "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. [22] Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. [23] Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."

Sounding brass or tinkling cymbal; the reason why one can speak God's statutes and preach God's covenant, but at the same time frame their mouth to speak evil, slander their brethren, their own mother's son, partake with thieves and adulterers, is because they have not charity, self-sacrificing love.

Ezekiel 22:17-22 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (18) Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. (19) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. (20) As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. (21) Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. (22) As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you."

Now notice; we are talking about a gathering of the dross, the brass, the iron, the tin; all this base metal that's connected with idolatry, corruption, slander, lies, hypocrisy, stubbornness, hard-heartedness. He says I will gather it into the furnace and will blow it, and will melt it. Now this is a gathering taking place, but this is not a gathering of something positive; this is a gathering of those that are wicked, and are to be gathered to be destroyed, because they will not reform, and will not change and they don't have charity.

You have seen that all these verses show that God's people are brass, iron, tin, all the dross, now the Bible will show you why.

Ezekiel 22:23-27 "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (24) Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. (25) There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. (26) Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. (27) Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain."

It's interesting that God likened his people unto wolves, remember by their fruits you shall know them, you be the judge. Remember Jesus said beware of those false prophets that come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves, by their fruits you shall know them. So what God is showing you here are the fruits of the priests and the prophets and His people. He is showing you why

they have become sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Although they have the law, although they have the Sabbath, although they have the sanctuary and the prophecies, look at what they have become, look at how corrupt they are; slanders, adulterers, deceitful, backbiters, backslidden, hard-hearted and stubborn.

Ezekiel 22:28-29 "And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. 29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully."

What has happened to the people of Israel, you have seen brethren that the sheep are not going to rise higher than their shepherds. In other words, whatever standard the minister or leader or clergymen set, that's what the people follow. So as we see the priests and the prophets, the leaders are corrupt, then it also has a negative effect upon the people.

Ezekiel 22:30-31 "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. (31) Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD."

God likens His people to brass, iron and tin, and dross because of the corruption, because of the life-style that you see within the Church. Now even though God blows them, and tries them, and melts them in the fire, what happens to the dross is the dross removed or remain? God uses fire to purify us, but to go through that fire and not be purified that's really unfortunate. Because when the blacksmith is purifying his metal to remove all the dross he is looking to see his own image or his own reflection on the metal. So the purpose of God purging us is so that when we get rid of dross, brass, iron and tin, He shouldn't see us, but He should see charity, self-sacrificing love. Then when He sees His own reflection He says, "This metal looks like Me", He can then put His stamp and seal upon it, because it looks like Him.

What happens if he sees dross or any impurity? Well He doesn't have any dross or impurity in Him, so how can He put His seal or endorsement upon that metal? He can't. Notice what He said in Ezekiel 24:

Ezekiel 24:9-11 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great. (10) Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. (11) Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed."

So notice we are talking of brass that has filthiness and scum on it; this is dealing with a wicked and backsliding, corrupt people.

Ezekiel 24:12-14 "She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. (13) In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. (14) I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD."

So notice, though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. I have become as brass that has filthiness and scum, and the filthiness and the scum is not the problem, the problem is that the filthiness and the scum cannot be removed, cannot be purged, and cannot be cleansed. There is nothing wrong with having a dirty bath

tub or something that needs to be scoured and cleansed, the problem is those stains that are not removed, because the brass does not submit to the refining process, so the scum and filthiness remains in her. So God says, "I have to pour out My wrath, and indignation and consume you."

We are going to read some statements from the Spirit of Prophecy concerning sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. Counsels on Health 559, para 3.

"The Lord's workers cannot be too careful that their actions do not contradict their words, for a consistent life alone can command respect. If our practice harmonizes with our teaching....."

Notice this, our life-style practice has to harmonize with our teaching. These two tables of Habakkuk, the 1843 and 1850 charts, that's our teaching, our foundation and pillars. If our practice harmonizes with our teachings, our words will have an effect. She goes on to say:

"....our words will have effect; but a piety which is not based upon conscientious principles is as salt without savor. **To speak, and do not, is as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.** It is of no use for us to strive to inculcate principles which we do not conscientiously practice." {CH 559.3}

Now who are those that are known for bringing out principles, teaching God's words, exacting and putting burdens on men's shoulders, telling people what to do, but they didn't do it themselves? It was the Pharisees. To speak and do not is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. You could be speaking with the tongues of men and of angels, you could be speaking the Three Angel's Messages; speaking Daniel and Revelation, speaking the truth for this time, having the gifts of the Spirit. But if you are preaching and teaching that, and our practice doesn't harmonize with our teaching, that's sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

Matthew 23:1-3 "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, (2) Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: (3) All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

So Jesus is saying, what the Pharisees are telling you to observe, yes go ahead and do that. Do the reforms, do the things that the Word of God is calling us to do, but don't do after their example. Health reform, dress reform, country living, true education reform, do those reforms That's not what the Pharisees were condemned on; they were condemned on was their example. They're telling you to do it, but they say and don't do it. Sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. This is the Pharisaical religion, the Pharisaical righteousness that says just because I have these truths made plain upon the tables; just because I have the reforms of the Third Angel and you think that constitutes righteousness. But you are saying these things and not doing them.

God is saying, "I hear what you are saying, but I also see what you are doing." Have you ever heard that before? "I hear your words, but I see what you are doing." What you are saying doesn't correspond with what you are doing, so you know what it sounds like unto me? It sounds like sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, it is confusion, it is noise, it is annoyance and irritation.

"Watch unto prayer. In this way alone can you put your whole being into the Lord's work. Self must be put in the background. Those who make self-prominent gain an education that soon becomes second nature to them; and they will soon fail to realize that instead of uplifting Jesus they uplift themselves, that instead of being channels through which the living water can flow to refresh others, they absorb the sympathies and affections of those around them. This is not loyalty to our crucified Lord." {CH 560.1}

The system of false education, the spirit of false education, can cause one to lift up themselves and not lift up Jesus. according to this statement, they are going to lift up themselves and draw attention and

attraction to themselves. Instead of being channels through which the living water can flow out from to refresh others, they absorb the sympathies and affections of those around them. This is not loyalty to our crucified Lord. This is not charity; but it is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

“But there are many prayers offered in a dry, sermonizing manner. These pray to men, not to God. If they were praying to God, and really understood what they were doing, they would be alarmed at their audacity; for they delivered a discourse to the Lord in the mode of prayer, as though the Creator of the universe needed special information upon general questions in relation to the things that were transpiring in the world. All such prayers are as sounding brass, and tinkling cymbal. They are made no account of in Heaven. Angels of God are wearied with them, as well as mortals who are compelled to listen to them.” {RH, May 30, 1871 par. 13}

So brethren, even in our prayers, we have to be careful that our prayers don't become sounding brass and tinkling cymbal; where God doesn't want to hear them and angels don't want to hear them and people are weary of listening to those prayers.

“I was taken into some of your singing exercises, and was made to read the feelings that existed in the company, you being the prominent one. There were petty jealousies, envy, evil surmisings, and evil speaking. . . . The heart service is what God requires; the forms and lip service are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Your singing is for display, not to praise God with the spirit and understanding. The state of the heart reveals the quality of the religion of the professor of godliness.”--Letter 1a, 1890. Ev 507.

In other words, if we are singing and leading out in these exercises and song services, but there is jealousy, envy, and evil surmising; your singing is for display, it's not in the spirit and in understanding, and it's not to God. God says that your singing is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. So even in our worship as well as our prayers it could be sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. You may be able to pray and talk and sing like an angel; but no charity, no self-sacrificing love, sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Just like a talkative person. No genuine heart experience, no experimental religion; you can talk about it but just as far as your religion goes; sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

“We long to see the true Christian character manifested in the church; we long to see its members free from a light, irreverent spirit; and we earnestly desire that they may realize their high calling in Christ Jesus. Some who profess Christ are exerting themselves to the utmost to so live and act that their religious faith may commend itself to people of moral worth, that they may be induced to accept the truth. But there are many who feel no responsibility, even to keep their own souls in the love of God, and who, instead of blessing others by their influence, are a burden to those who would work and watch and pray. These careless, indifferent ones are a dead weight upon our churches everywhere. Their principal study is not how they can let their light so shine that others will be drawn to God and the truth, but how they will manage, by affectation and display, to attract attention to themselves.”

Now notice this, their study is not so that they let light shine, so that they can draw people to God. No; their motive of study and the reason why they share light, is not that others should be drawn to God and the truth, but how they can manage by affectation to attract attention to themselves. That's why they are giving the light, that's why they are sharing the truth, because they are attracting to themselves, not to God.

“Those who are seeking in humbleness of mind to exalt the truth of Christ by their exemplary course, are represented in the word of God as fine gold; while the class whose chief thought and study is to exhibit themselves, are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” {RH, June 3, 1880 par. 3}

Notice; their chief purpose of study is to exhibit themselves so they are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

“Everything in our character that can not enter the city of God will be reprov'd; if we will submit to the Lord's refining, all the dross and the tin will be consumed. As the Lord's chosen ones will receive the light appropriate for this time, they will not be led to exalt themselves.”

If God's people are receiving the light for this time, you are not going to be led to exalt yourself. If the light you receive leads you to lift up and exalt yourself, I question whether that's the light for this time. Because light for this time doesn't lead anybody to lift up themselves, but rather to humble themselves at the foot of the cross, to lay all their glory in the dust, like Daniel, or like John the Revelator. But when one is exalting himself, and lifting himself up, and saying, “This is the light.” I question if it's the true light; maybe it's Satan as an angel of light, coming to God's people, transforming himself into the minister of light and righteousness.

“As the Lord's chosen ones will receive the light appropriate for this time, they will not be led to exalt themselves. They will not manufacture a standard whereby to measure their own character.....”

If your light also leads you to manufacture a standard by which you are measuring and testing others, I question whether that light is coming from God or from Satan.

“They will not manufacture a standard whereby to measure their own character, for the Lord has given one standard, by which every character is to be tested.”

Would you like to know the standard by which every character is going to be tested? It is not going to be human standards, it is not the standard that I say, because I want to; or I feel like it. No; what is the one standard?

“There is not one standard for the poor, and another for the rich; for all will be tested by that law which bids us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.”

There's the test, the standard; love for God and love for man. Can you have love for God and for men without charity? So we become sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

“Those who win the treasure of heaven will be those who have laid up their treasure above. God gives us light and opportunities to learn from Christ; that we may be like him in spirit and character; but we are not to conform to any human standard. We are to receive the truth of God into the heart, that it may regulate the life and form the character.” 1888 1101.

Brethren, what is the purpose for the truth, what is the purpose for the truth made plain upon the tables? It is not to regulate the life and conform the character to the standard that God has set up? That's the purpose of it. So if the truth is not doing that in us, then what good is it to us?

“By beholding we become changed. Through close study and earnest contemplation of the character of Christ, his image is reflected in our own lives, and a higher tone is imparted to the spirituality of the church.” RH, April 24, 1913

You want to become changed; you want to have that experience? Then what should we be studying?

Along with these most wonderful and advanced truths, we have to study and contemplate the character of Christ. Not only is 1 Corinthians 13 to be read every day, but we are told in the Desire of Ages that it would do us well to spend a thoughtful hour meditating on the life of Christ, especially the closing scenes. Why do we need that? In other words there are not many things that God tells you to

read every day and do every day. One thing we know to read every day is 1 Corinthians 13. Another thing we know it would be well to do every day; spend a thoughtful hour on the life of Christ.

It's challenging us to do those things. If we are not doing those things, how can we expect to be changed? In other words if we are spending more time studying the tables, and not studying the cross of Christ, just as diligently, how do we expect to be changed? You don't have a balance; you're unbalanced.

"If the truth of God has not transformed our characters into the likeness of Christ, all our professed knowledge of him and the truth is but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

{RH, April 24, 1913 par. 3}

Did you see that? If the truth of God, made upon tables, the Three Angel's Messages, the everlasting gospel, has not transformed our characters, it is a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." RH, April 24, 1913 par. 4

So what is God interested in? Does He want more ceremonies? Does He want more convocations? Does He want more sacrifices and more offerings? Does He want more rituals? He says, "Now I want practical godliness." He says, "Visit the fatherless, plead for the widow, wash you, make yourself clean, put away the evil." In other words, "The reason I am not accepting your worship, and you services and offerings, is because it is mingled with evil. I can't accept that." God doesn't want us to go through the forms, the rounds and the ceremonies; He says, "Listen, put away sin or I cannot accept it." Your services and your convocations itself can become abomination and iniquity to God, where He doesn't want to deal with it.

"Let all who claim to keep the commandments of God, look well to this matter, and see if there are not reasons why they do not have more of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit."

Who wants more of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit? The reason why is because the truth He has given us, has not transformed the character. So we say, "Lord give more truth, give me more light, give me more understanding!" Is it making you more loving, more kind, patience, forbearing, heavenly minded? If not it's becoming a curse to you and through your influence it is the curse to the world. So why want more truth, more light, and more understanding, while you are getting more wicked, more rebellious, more stubborn, more hard-hearted? This is the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal that he is talking about. This is the reason why, with the absence of charity and self-sacrificing love, that we don't see more of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.

"How many have lifted up their souls unto vanity! They think themselves exalted in the favor of God, but they neglect the needy, they turn a deaf ear to the calls of the oppressed, and speak

sharp, cutting words to those who need altogether different treatment. Thus they offend God daily by their hardness of heart. These afflicted ones have claims upon the sympathies and the interest of their fellow men. They have a right to expect help, comfort, and Christlike love." {RH, April 24, 1913 par. 5}

So notice, we profess to have the most wonderful and advanced truths in the world. People expect to get Christ-like love from us, but we have none to give to them. They should expect to see a higher level of holiness, a higher grade of spirituality, Christlike love and sympathy, altogether different treatment, but what do they get? Harsh words, harsh speeches; why would anybody want to accept that?

So why don't people accept the 2520? Oh I know, we say that they just don't want to study the truth; they just refuse to study the truth. But brethren, maybe we have been giving the 2520 all these years, sharing these charts all these years; speaking the tongue of men and of angels, but there has been no charity with it. And so what they're hearing is not these truths, but they are hearing sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Who wants to hear that? That's why they are closing their ears and their hearts from it. They don't see self-sacrificing love.

And most of the people who share these truths they don't have a burden for souls; they don't love people. We don't know how to labour with souls. We don't even know how to explain things and answer questions. We think, "Ah they are fighting, and rebelling; they're asking questions." No; some people just really want Bible texts, really want you to explain it to them.

We can't do it though, we say, "Here is the DVD." "But I want you to open your Bible and show me. I don't want that DVD, I want you to show me in the Bible."

We say, "No that's why I gave you the DVD." We can't even give an answer. Then on top of that we are going to be mean spirited, evil, corrupt, and wicked. Why should they want to hear anything? They are hearing sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, that's what they're hearing.

If you are a parent out there; you've been a child before, if you are a parent. Children know when they are being loved, and when they're not. When you have evil in your voice and hate in your voice, they know the difference. And with people; they know if you love their soul or not, as you are sharing these things with them, they know it.

So could it be that this is the reason why people have been rejecting the truth for this time? They were not rejecting truth, they're rejecting you. They're rejecting your presentation. They have never have a faithful presentation of the truth; so how can we say they have really rejected it? If all they heard is sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, that's not a faithful presentation of the truth. That's not giving the trumpet a certain sound. It's a confused sound; it's a sound of annoyance and irritation. People should be drawn to the truth and drawn to the message, because of charity, but instead of being drawn they're running away from it. Then we say, "O well, that's the gospel; that's what God said will happen". No! That's sounding brass and tinkling cymbal; nobody wants to hear that, it drives people away, they want to have nothing to do with it.

"An appeal to our ministers and conference committees."

"Those who are trying to teach others the Bible truth, and are not themselves sanctified through obedience to the truth, are sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." SpTA01b 22.

That means you; that means me; I am teaching the truth to others and I am not sanctified through obedience to the truth; I will be sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. "You say one thing, I hear what you're saying, but I see what you're doing. What you're saying and what you're doing is not in harmony." That is confusion, that is Babylon.

“Those who are one with Christ have the mind of Christ, and work the works of Christ. They are ever improving, ever drawing nearer to God, ever uplifting the soul to Jesus. By beholding the world’s Redeemer, they become changed into his image. A new spiritual life is created, a new motive-power supplied. When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is supplied by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ.” SpTA01b 22.

You want the vacuum to be filled with the spirit of God? Then self have to be emptied and every false god has to cast out of the soul. The soul temple has to be cleansed, then the vacuum is supplied with the inflowing of the spirit of Christ.

“Such a one has the faith which works by love and purifies the soul from every moral and spiritual defilement. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, can work upon the heart, influencing, directing, so that he enjoys spiritual things. He is “after the Spirit,” and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self; Christ is all in all. Truth is constantly being unfolded by the Holy Spirit; he receives with meekness the engrafted Word, and he gives the Lord all the glory, saying. “God has revealed them to us by his Spirit.” “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God.” The Spirit that reveals, also works in him the fruits of righteousness.” SpTA01b 22.2

The spirit that is revealing truth, is also at the same time working in you, the fruit of righteousness. So you cannot separate the two. If it's the same Spirit that reveals truth, the same Spirit that will also bring you the fruit of righteousness. We are depended upon the Spirit for both the truth and the fruit; and when we have the truth and the fruit, then we are complete, we are whole.

“Christ is in him, “a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.” He is a branch of the True Vine, and bears rich clusters of fruit to the glory of God. What is the character of the fruit borne?—“The fruit of the Spirit is love.” Mark the words,—love, not hatred; it is joy, not discontent and mourning; peace, not irritation, anxiety, and manufactured trials. It is “long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” SpTA01b 22.

“Those who have this spirit will be earnest laborers together with God; the heavenly intelligences co-operate with them, and they go weighted with the spirit of the message of truth which they bear. They are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. They are ennobled, refined, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. They have not brought into the treasury of the soul, wood, hay, stubble, but gold, silver, and precious stones. They speak words of solid sense, and from the treasures of the heart bring forth pure and sacred things according to the example of Christ.” SpTA01b 23.1

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. Discord and strife are the work of Satan and the fruit of sin. If we would as a people enjoy peace and love, we must put away our sins; we must come into harmony with God, and we shall be in harmony with one another.” 5T 169.

So notice, we want the fruit of the spirit, love, joy and peace? Put away the sins; be in harmony with God; and then we can be in harmony with one another. The reason why we cannot be in harmony with one another is because we are not on one accord with God. And how do I know that we are not on one accord with God? Because we have not put away our sins. That is what causing discord, strife and division, that's the fruit of sin, not the fruit of the Spirit.

”Let each ask himself: Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long and to be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless

as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith!" 5T 169.3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels; I have the gift of the spirit, former rain and latter rain; I am preaching the three angels' messages; I am preaching Daniel 11:40-45; if I don't have charity, self-sacrificing love, I have become a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

Let us pray:

Our Father in heaven; we pray that You would forgive us for misrepresenting Christ and for presenting another christ before people. We've been presenting a different christ that is full of the works of the flesh; strife; debate; envy; jealousy; no patience, no forbearance. So people have heard what we said, what we've shared through the years, but they see what we are doing, and to them it is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. It is the sound of a loud voice of confusion, irritation and annoyance, and that is why they have turned away from it. We say that they have rejected the truth, when really, they have rejected us, they've rejected our character; they've rejected our spirit. It lacked the salt of grace; and the flavor of love, joy, and peace, and that is why they don't want to eat it; it is unpalatable; it is indigestible. Forgive us Father where we have fallen short; we have prided ourselves in our ability to speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not had that charity, that essential qualification, which without this, everything we do is worthless, it won't bring salvation.

It will cause strife and controversy and debate, but many souls will be lost, and we'll have to suffer the blame for how we've handled these truths and how we've handled God's people. So I am asking that You would help us to be revived and help us to be reformed in these areas; that the truth of God would bring beauty to the soul, beauty to the spirit, to the words, thoughts and actions. Otherwise, if it doesn't transform us into the character of Christ, it's as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Unless we're sanctified by obedience to the truth that we share with others, we are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Our religion is Pharisaical; and unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, we will in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

So please help us Father; we need Your grace, we need Your Spirit; we need You to help us look to Calvary and there contemplate and study the cross until the dross is removed, the selfishness, the envy, the jealousy, the hardness of heart, the stubbornness is taken away and therefore we can come forth like gold, bearing the image of our Master and being able to share the truth with others. Then our words will have effect; will have success as our practices harmonize with the truths we teach. This is our prayer and we thank Thee that You're willing to do exceedingly and abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the Power that works within. In Jesus' name, Amen.