A BEAUTIFUL DRESS

Colossians 3:14

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection."

The matter of dress is one of no mean importance. It is a tremendously fascinating subject. We think that it is peculiarly so to the ladies. But when we come down to the facts in the case, some men are quite as interested and quite as fastidious in their taste. I have known one at least that is so particular in his buying that I told him one day that if I were running a store in his city I would hire a special policeman just to keep him out. We are all more or less interested in the matter of dress.

And, mark you, I am not criticising this very human trait. We ought to be interested. Dress is a social affair. It has to do not only with ourselves, but with others as well. In the beginning, Carlisle thinks it was purely social. That is, that when men first began to wear clothes he did so not for the sake of comfort, nor even for the sake of modesty, but purely for ornamentation. He wanted to make himself as beautiful as possible, hence he began to wear clothes.

It is easy to believe in the correctness of this view if we will only consider the dress of savage tribes. Some of them deck themselves in beads. Some wear wristlets and anklets. I have read of those who wear paint, tho some think that this tribe has become extinct. But certainly the people of savage countries do not dress with the view to modesty or to comfort. But the one end that they seek is beauty and attractiveness of person.

And we do not run past this end easily. Of course as we advance in civilization we are actuated by other motives. We dress for the sake of modesty. Also we seek personal comfort. But we never forget that clothes answer for ornamental purposes. Even in civilized countries I have seen people that seem to have this in view more than even modesty or comfort. We used to ram our feet into shoes that were too small and torture ourselves into a slimness to which we had no claim just because we thought it becoming. In this particular, I am glad to say that we are improving. Women's dress is today more sensible than I have ever known. It is true that sometimes there is not enough of it, but on a whole they have improved. I believe they are dressing more intelligently and at the same time more beautifully than at any other time.

Not only is dress a form by which we seek to make ourselves attractive to others and to enhance our personal charms, but it is of importance to ourselves personally. A beautiful dress influences the wearer quite as much as it does the beholder. Have you not heard ladies say more than once that they can just naturally be more attractive when they are conscious of the fact that they are well dressed? If they know themselves to be out of style, if they know that they are poorly and uneconomically dressed, they feel self-conscious and strained. They are unable to be at their best.
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On the other hand, if they are conscious of being becomingly dressed, they are more at their ease and are able to give the best possible account of themselves.

But if dress in general is a matter of importance, the dress of which the Apostle speaks in our text is of supreme importance. I do not blame anyone for a desire to do dress as to make the best possible impression. I do not blame anyone for wanting to be just as beautiful as it is within their power to be. Some of us need all the improvement that is within our reach. But if you want to know the highest art in the realm of dress, study this garment recommended by Paul. He himself wore it constantly, and it accounts in great part for the tremendous influence he exerted upon the people of his own generation, as well as upon the people of all generations that have followed.

I.

Notice some of the characteristics of this costume that the Apostle recommends.

1. It is a dress that will fit anybody in the world. It will fit a giant, and it will also fit a pigmy. It will fit the lithe and sinuous form of youth. It will also fit the wasted and withered form of old age. It will fit one who is as graceful as a fallow. It will also fit one who is as graceless and deformed as the hunchback. There is absolutely no human being that it will not fit perfectly, beautifully, as the falcon's feathers fit the falcon.

Now you know it is of great importance that our clothes fit. There is nothing cheaper than a misfit store. If our garments do not fit we either make them over again or throw them away. But the most skillful tailor that ever worked could not make a garment that would more easily fit you than this garment would fit any man or woman who would be wise enough to wear it.

2. Not only will this garment fit anybody in the world, but it will make anybody attractive. It will so become any wearer as to make that wearer charming. In this particular it is certainly in a class by itself. The finest of clothing is absolutely powerless to make some folks attractive. In fact you have noticed more than once that the more finery some people put on the less fine they seem to become. Their beautiful clothes seem only to accent their own lack of beauty. But here is a garment that will make anybody in the world attractive.

A friend of mine told me some time ago that he was standing in the ward of a prison hospital. He said he saw a little hunchback woman come into that hospital. Upon his first glance at her he thought that he had never seen anybody more homely. But he looked again, and she was wearing this beautiful dress that the Apostle Paul so heartily recommends. And his opinion changed concerning this hunchback absolutely. He said that instead of seeing the most homely woman that he had ever seen, he became convinced that Helen of Troy was not half so fair. Here then is a recipe
for real beauty. Here is the secret of abiding personal charm. Whoever you are and wherever you are, dress yourself in this lovely garment and you will certainly be fascinating. This is true whether you are in the springtime of life or in the wintertime. It is true whether you are cultured or uncultured. It is true whether you live in the alley or live on Fifth Avenue. Nobody ever went forth in this winsome garment but what there was a fascination about them that the most skillful of dressmakers are powerless to produce.

3. The third characteristic of this marvelous dress is that it is suitable for any occasion. You know quite well that a dress that would be in perfectly good taste on one occasion would not be in any taste at all on another. We have dresses for morning and dresses for noon and dresses for afternoon and dresses for evening. We have dresses that are suitable for occasions of joy. And then we have dresses that are worn in the house of mourning. And woe to the luckless individual that comes upon the scene wearing the wrong costume.

In a fastidious church in our Methodism there was to be a very fastidious wedding. This fastidious wedding was to be held in the church. And the hour was 5:30 in the afternoon. A most fastidious crowd of friends were gathered. But the preacher was from the country. He thought he knew how to dress, but he did not. And he came to this wedding to perform a fastidious ceremony for a fastidious bride and groom before a fastidious audience in a fastidious church, and he had on a dress suit, and it was thirty minutes before the dress suit was due. He had it on at 5:30, but it was not evening until 6. And so his reputation was ruined in that community. But this dress will fit any occasion. It is a splendid house dress. You can wear it at home with great comfort to yourself and with yet greater comfort to those who live with you. It is true that there are some who seem to feel that it should only be worn when we go abroad, but this is a great mistake. It should be worn abroad, but it should be especially worn at home.

Then if there is a wedding in your neighbors house across the way, there is absolutely no dress that you could wear that would make you as welcome as this one. You can go with the feeling that everyone concerned will be glad to see you. But if on the other hand, it was a funeral instead of a wedding, if instead of laughter there were tears, if instead of sunshine there were black shadows, if instead of the sealing of the bonds of union, there were painful separations, then this dress would be quite as becoming. You would fit in if you were wearing it, quite as well in the house of mourning as in the house of mirth.

Then it is good to wear on the street. It is good to wear down at your place of business. It is a fine dress to have on as you transact your business upon the marts of trade. In fact I could not possibly conceive of a situation where you would not be made more welcome and where your presence would not be made helpful if you are only clad in this wonderful and winsome garment. Truly, it is one that may be becomingly worn upon every occasion of which we may conceive.

4. Then this beautiful dress never wears out. It never becomes
threadbare or spotted or soiled or unsightly. If you wear it, it will be just as new and fresh in the evening as it was in the morning. It will be just as untarnished and as free from soil in the last day of winter as it was the first day of spring. It will absolutely never wear out.

Now I know what some of you are saying. "I would not want a dress like that. I want mine to wear out so I can get a new one that will be in style. Styles do change. It is absolutely laughable to look at the clothes that our fathers and mothers used to wear. We can laugh over them quite as heartily as our children will laugh over ours. There was never a fickle lover any more changeable than is style. But this dress will always be in style. I suppose the fact that so few people wear it might help a little to that end. A good dresser does not want to wear the same thing that everybody else wears. And if you see a certain style of hat worn by about twenty percent of the folks you meet, that is the very style you do not buy. You want to be refreshingly unique. And if that is your desire, you should by all means possess yourself of this costume. For, while it never wears out, neither does it ever go out of style.

5. And the last characteristic of this wonderful dress is that it is within reach of the poorest as well as the richest. There is absolutely nobody in the world too poor to possess this most wonderful dress if they so desire. It would be useless for me to tell you how well you would look in the dress in which Princess Mary was married. You would reply "That is beyond my reach." She is a king's daughter, but I am poor. Even tho' such a garment might make me beautiful, yet if there is no other way to attain beauty than that I must miss it forever, because the price is far too great. It is forever beyond my reach." But not so with this dress. However poor you may be, this dress is as much within your reach as it is within the reach of the richest man or woman in the wide world. All you have to do to possess it is simply to put it on.

Now since this dress will fit anybody in the world, since it will fit you and it will fit me, since it will make anybody in the world attractive, that includes you and that includes me.

Since this dress is suitable for any occasion and never wears out and never goes out of style, and since it is within reach of the poorest as well as the richest, therefore it would be supremely wise for us to hear the wise words of Paul in Colossians 3:14 where he says "Put on love." Dress yourself morning, noon and night from youth to old age, from the cradle to the grave in the charming, winsome raiment of the garment of love.

II.

Now it would not surprise me in the least if some of you are a little disappointed in this dress. So many wonderful things are said about it. When you heard what it was you may have settled back and said "Ah, I thought it was something sure enough attractive." "I thought it was something that I might indeed desire to possess for myself!" And I trust you do desire to possess it. Do not get the idea that this dress is too sober and too drab and colorless for you. There is absolutely no color in the world that is so amazingly beautiful.
Look at some of the material that enters into the composition of it. Paul does not name all the parts of this beautiful dress. But he names enough of them to increase our yearning to possess it.

1. The first element that he mentions as entering into this dress is tender-heartedness. Now, isn't it fine to have a tender heart. Would you not hate to get to the place where your own heart is so hard that you could never feel any more? That you could no more laugh with another's laughter and sing with another's song? Would you not count it a tragedy were you to get to the place where your eye would never again be moistened by a tear.

If you are clothed in the garment of love then you will be tender hearted. You will be full of sympathy. You will be able to look on the world thru eyes that have seen the cross. Your judgments will not be harsh and bitter. They may be severe, but they will always be tempered and shot thru with the exquisite grace of tenderness. Most of us feel, I suppose, that we get our share of shedding. We have been cuffed about quite a bit and we have dealt those who have cuffed us blow for blow. Suppose we try tenderness. Meet the world in a spirit of tender-heartedness and you will meet it to bring it a blessing.

But it is not always easy to keep a tender heart in a world like ours. Custom tends to harden us. The first time we ever attended a funeral we wept as one of the mourners. But we have attended many and we do not feel that way any more. The first time we ever swore, we were horrified, but we do not feel that way any more. The first time we ever went to the Sunday movies we went home with a strange ache at our hearts. But this is all past. The first time the call of Christ was brought home definitely to us, then the deeps of our soul seemed broken up. But we can hear the most earnest appeal now and be unmoved. We have lost our tenderness of heart. Let us seek to regain it. We can do so by deck ing ourselves in the garment of love.

2. The second element that enters into this beautiful dress is kindness. "Love suffereth long and is kind", Paul says in another place. Kindness is the natural outcome of tender-heartedness. If you are really tender-hearted, you will also be kind. And do you know of anything that this old world needs more today more than genuine kindness. This does not mean mere softness. Sometimes the kindest thing you can do to a man is to rebuke him. Sometimes the kindest thing you can do to your child is to punish him. But we need kindness, everyone of us.

There are folks that think tenderness of heart is for us to gush and shed tears. There are people who actually fancy themselves tender-hearted because they can go down to the movies and see some imaginary suffering and shed tears as large as the end of your small finger. But after they get thru shedding them they wipe their eyes and go on their selfish way with never a thought of helping the lonely soul that may be at their side. The tears of Jesus, the tears of Paul, the tears of those who are thoroughly tender of heart are not like that. They not only weep, they work. The tears upon their faces are like blossoms upon the apple trees. They show that there is springtime in their hearts. Such tears lead inevitably to positive kindness.
3. The next element that enters into this beautiful dress is humility of mind. Paul expresses it in another place by saying "Love suffereth not itself." Love does not boast, does not swagger; it is not all the time pattering itself on the back. The wearer of this costume will be meek. He will have humility. And, mark you, humility is not a mean virtue. It is the one characteristic in Himself to which Jesus called attention. He never said "learn of me for I am wise." But He did say, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart." It is not thinking meanly of yourself. It is failing to think of yourself at all. It is forgetting yourself in the service of others.

Now if you are chuck full of egotism and conceit, do not wonder at your lack of popularity. If you love yourself better than anybody else, folks are mighty apt to find it out, and having found it out, they are not likely to greatly love you in return. I know an individual today who is as eager to be loved as any man I have ever known. His hunger for appreciation and for applause is absolutely pathetic. But very little of it comes his way. And the reason is not his lack of ability. He is a very capable man. The reason is not his lack of effort. He tries hard. The reason is just this - his conceit. He can never carry on a conversation even over the telephone, and certainly he can never make a five minutes speech, without the sum and substance is this: "I, I, I;". He loses that that he most yearns for by failing to wear this winsome garment of love.

4. The fourth element that enters into this costume is patience or long suffering. "Love suffereth long". Love is exceedingly patient. We read how Jacob waited seven years for his Rachel, and the story says that seemed but seven days because of the love he had for her. If you are always losing patience with everybody, flaring up and kicking things to pieces, you are lacking in love. Love is patient. Love is glad to bear, strong to endure.

5. The fifth element is a forgiving spirit. "Forgive one another" says the Apostle, "if any hath wronged you." And, mark you, it takes love to forgive. When a boy goes wrong and brings dishonor into his home, when he goes into the Far Country and every pure drop of blood in his veins, there are folks that refuse to forgive him. But his mother is not of the number. His father may scold and his father may chide, but every word of his mother comes from a loving and bleeding heart baptized in tears. She forgives because she loves.

"Forgive one another." That refers not to one single act. But to the disposition. We are to forgive not once, but over and over again. We must do this to be Christ-like. That is the way He does. He has to forgive us again and again and He calls on us to forgive even seventy times seven. It seems a startling requirement until we remember that if He requires us to forgive this often, certainly He will not fall short in His dealings with ourselves.

III.

Suppose we should all wear this beautiful dress. Do you not see that almost nothing else would be needed to make this world a heaven. There are many pains and many heart-breaking separations. But in spite of all these if we only everyone of us wore this winsome garment day by day a large part
of the world's tears would be dried. The Kingdom of God would immediately come and this present world would be with the (perfume) of the house not made with hands.

And remember, we may wear this garment if we want to. Paul does not say to us, "Buy the garment of love." He knows we could not buy it were we possessed of all the wealth of the world. Nobody ever bought an ounce of love yet. If you are not getting along well with that young lady with whom you are going, there is no use in sending her a whole hot house of roses. It will do little good to send her bushels of candy. Your jewels will count for nothing. You cannot buy love. You can buy fawning and flattery. You can buy hypocrisy. You can buy a disgusting substitute for love. But nobody can buy real love, human or Divine.

How then are we to possess this garment? We are not even told to make it. Our human fingers are very skilled, but they cannot make love. Paul's direction is this: "Put on love." The garment is furnished you. All you have to do is to put it on. It is given as the gracious gift of our loving Lord and Master.

God is the Eternal Giver. But of all His gifts, this beautiful gift of love is the best. It Does not mean simply of being loved, but the gift of loving. "Covet only" you read, "the best gift." And what is the best gift? "Faith, hope, and knowledge." Not even hope. The best gift he tells us is love. "Now there abideth faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." And how should we possess it? Only by possessing Him. As we let Him into our hearts. As we put on Christ we are enabled to put on love. For His love shall then be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.
The matter of dress is of no small importance. I am not saying that as a rule it is of supreme importance, though I must confess that such is the case with the costume of which I am to speak to you this morning. But the ordinary business of dressing is something that is not to be despised. It is a thing that demands our careful consideration. It is of real importance to everyone of us.

In the first place, dress is a social affair. Carlyle, in his "Philosophy of Dress" offers the thoughtful and, I think, true suggestion that clothes in the beginning were not worn for the sake of modesty. Oftentimes they are not so worn today. Nor were they worn for the sake of comfort or protection. Clothes, in the beginning, were ornaments strictly. He thinks it was the desire of our early fathers to be as attractive as possible that led them to the practice of wearing clothes.

Whether this is true or not, one prime consideration with us in the selecting of our dress to-day is for purposes of ornamentation. We seek to wear those articles of clothing that will make us most attractive. Sometimes we do this at the expense of comfort and even at the expense of modesty. But this is the primary end that is sought.

And there is nothing wrong in this. We ought to make ourselves just as attractive as possible. And our dress certainly has something to do with the appeal we make to others and with the impression we make upon others. That is true with regard to the preacher. There are folks who want him to dress in a certain way that appeals to their sense of the fitness of things. If he fails to do so he has lessened his influence with them just to that extent. It is a matter of importance to the preacher and to everyone else.

Then dress affects us in another way. You have heard women say again and again that they can simply be more attractive if they are conscious of the fact that they are well dressed. A sense of shabbiness, of being out of style, puts a sense of embarrassment and restraint upon some. It causes them to be at a great disadvantage in their mingling with their fellows, whereas, if they are well dress and know it, they are more at their ease. They are less self-conscious. They are, for that reason, able to be more interesting and attractive.

Now, the author of this text was a man who set great store by the dress that he wore. The costume that he is recommending to others he consistently wore himself. And it made him welcome and at home in all sorts of society. In fact, it accounts in no small measure for the tremendous influence he had upon the people of his day and upon those of all subsequent generations.

Truly, this dress of which I am to speak and which the author of our text recommends is the most wonderful costume ever worn. You will agree with me when I tell you some of its amazing characteristics. In the first place, it is a dress that will fit anybody. It will fit a little child. It will also fit a giant. It will fit those who are in the springtime of life. It will also fit the tottering bodies of those who are doing the toilsome journey of the last mile. It will fit those who are as graceful
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as Venus and as snappy as Apollo. It will also fit the awkward and the gawky and the misshapen.

Now, you know it is a matter of no small importance for your clothes to fit you. A misfit is always an abomination. But if you wear this costume you may rest assured that it will fit you perfectly. It will fit you as the falcon's feathers fit the falcon.

Not only is this a costume that will fit anybody. It is one that will make anybody attractive. There is absolutely no exception to this rule. It is the only costume I know that will do this. I have known some folks that the finer the clothing that they wore, the more glaringly ugly and unattractive they seemed to become. The very finery of the dress accentuated their own lack of fineness.

But here is a costume, I repeat, that will become anybody. However beautiful you may be, this costume will greatly enhance your beauty. However homely you may be this costume will somehow erase the marring marks of ugliness. Why, a man told me the other day of seeing a little faded hunchback woman. He said by nature she was repellant. But she came dressed in this lovely dress. And he said, "As I looked at her I was confident that Helen of Troy was not half so fair." Do you want to be beautiful? Do you want to be genuinely attractive? Then at any price get hold of this marvelous dress.

Not only will this dress fit anybody and make anybody attractive, it is also suitable for any occasion. Now you know that the costumes that we have are not suitable for all occasions. We have evening dresses and morning dresses and afternoon dresses and dresses for this occasion and that. And to come out in the wrong costume is a crime. I knew a preacher who came to a very fastidious wedding in a very fastidious church and he had on an evening suit when it was not evening and it ruined his reputation. But here, I say, is a costume that will suit any occasion.

For instance, it is good to wear at home. It is a splendid house dress. It makes there for your own comfort and joy. Especially it makes for the comfort of others. I know there are some folks who seem to save this dress for wearing in public only. But that is a great mistake. There is no place that it is more needful, there is no place that it can be worn more becomingly than at home.

Then it is good for the street. It is good for the public office. It is good for the store. It is good to be worn on the marts of trade. I know if you wear it there you will not be dressed altogether like most of your fellows. In fact, you will be refreshingly unique. But you will not be bizarre. There will be a fine individuality about your dress without anything of grotesqueness. Then if there is a funeral in the house of your friend it is just the dress to wear there. No costume you could possibly put on would be so absolutely fitting. Of if there is instead of a funeral a wedding then you can wear this same lovely garb. And it will be as absolutely in place at the one as at the other. It is becoming where folks are bubbling over with laughter and where eyes are alight with joy. It is no less becoming where hearts are breaking and where faces are wet with tears.
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Then another wonderful characteristic of this dress is that it never grows old. You can wear it morning, noon and night. You can wear it in springtime, summer, autumn and winter. You can wear it from youth to old age. But it will never lose its newness. It will never become slick and spotted and threadbare. It will be as new and fresh at sunset as it was at sunrise. It will be as fresh and unspotted at threescore and ten as it was in life's early springtime.

But I know what you will say here. You will say, "I do not want a dress to last always, because it will soon go out of style. Folks will soon get tired of it." But this is a dress that is always in style. One reason, I suppose, that this is true is because no large number of people ever wear it. A really good dresser does not want to wear exactly what everybody else wears. If you will wear this costume I can guarantee that you will be, as I hinted above, refreshingly unique. There will be a charming individuality about you. You will always be in style without being commonplace.

Then the last fact that I wish to mention about this dress is one that is very important. That fact is this: there is nobody in the world so poor as not to be able to possess this marvelous costume. It would be useless for me to tell you about the beautiful dress in which Princess Mary was married. You would say, "Oh, I know it was pretty enough. But it cost thousands of dollars. It was beyond my reach. I am not a princess. I am poor." But this dress is within the reach of the most penniless. And mark me, it is far more wonderful and far more valuable than any that went to make up the lovely trousseau of earth's most fortunate princess.

Now, because this dress is so perfectly charming, and because it may be had by anybody, therefore Paul comes to us with this recommendation: "Wherefore," he says, "put on love." That is the garment that he himself wore - love. That was the marvelous and fascinating garb in which he called upon men and women of all times and climes to deck themselves - the charming garb of love. "Wherefore, clothe yourselves with love."

Now I have a fancy that some of you are a trifle disappointed in this costume that the apostle is recommending to you. "Love" you say. "I do not especially care for it. It is a rather sober, uncolorful garment. It gives too much the impression of monotony. I want a dress that has more of the riot of color."

But there you are mistaken. There is plenty of color in this dress. There is endless variety. It is not a drab affair. Look at some of the marvelous colors that enter into the warp and woof of love. Paul names a few of them here. He wants to excite our admiration and our longing.

The first he mentions is tender-heartedness. If we dress ourselves in the garment of love we are going to have tenderness of heart. And isn't that a fine and fascinating possession? Do we not need that our friends should look upon us with tenderness and with sympathy? Are there not those about us that need our sympathetic interest and appreciation? "Clothe yourself with tenderness of heart." Oh, what a blessed privi-
lege it is to have as our friend one who is tender-hearted, one who is able to rejoice with those that do rejoice and weep with those that weep. We are so calloused, many of us. We take the sin and sorrow and anguish of the world so little to heart. That is the reason we do so little. That is the reason we bring so little benediction to those who know us.

For mark me, if you have tenderness of heart you are going to make an effort to help those toward whom your heart is tender. If you wear the garment of love you will have tender-heartedness, but you will have more than that. You will be kind. So Paul says, "Clothe yourselves with kindness." Love is kind. Tenderness of heart is the mother of kind acts.

Now, I know what many people take for tenderness of heart. There are folks who think they are tender-hearted because they shed tears easily. You see a pathetic picture drawn at the theatre and you shed big tears over it. You are so sorry for the sufferers that are depicted upon the screen. But the minute the play is over you dry your eyes and not only forget the picture, but worst of all, you forget those at your side who are suffering worse anguish than that you have witness in the play. Tenderness that does nothing but shed tears is counterfeit.

"Jesus beheld the city and wept over it." But He did more than weep. He went down and cleansed its temple. He went down and healed its sick. He went down and carried its load of guilt on His great heart to the cross. His tender-heartedness led Him to action. It must be the same with ourselves.

So kindness is one of the winsome parts of this lovely garb. I know it doesn't sound so exceedingly showy. I know we think that there are other things that would be far more charming. But there is where you are mistaken. There are few things better than the fine privilege of going about your daily duties dressed in the robe of kindness.

"'Tis something when the day draws to its close,
To know that though I have borne a troubled mind,
Have tasted neither rapture nor repose,
Yet this remains -- to all men, friend or foe,
I have been kind.

'Tis something when I shall hear death's awful tread
upon the stair,
To know that His keen eye shall see upon my heart
Old wounds that oft did bleed for others.
But no heart I injured. My life was kind.

Then here is another lovely color that enters into this wonderful costume - humble-mindedness. You know Paul says in another place, "Love vaunteth not itself." If a child is sick in the home the mother does not brag so very much about the fact that she nurses it and cares for it. If you put on some clothes you have a tendency to swagger. Dress yourself in egotism and you will absorb the whole conversation and your whole talk will be about yourself. Wear that dress and you can not speak in public two minutes without saying, "I", "I", "I". And don't be surprised if you
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are not popular if you are always strutting about in a peacock garb of your own self-conceit. People could not love you if they wanted to.

But here is the way into the heart of anybody. "Put on humbleness of mind." It does not mean that you are to garb yourself in robes of contempt. It does not mean that you are to dress yourself from the wardrobe of Uriah Heep. It means rather that you are to wear the seamless robe of your Master. "Learn of me," He says, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." Glad in that costume you will not think meanly of yourself. You will rather forget yourself in your effort to serve.

The next color that enters into this wonderful attire is long-suffering. You are to wear the garb of patience. "Love suffereth long," Paul says. We read that Jacob toiled seven years for his Rachel and they seemed to him as but seven-days for the love he had to her. Love bears and bears patiently. "Clothe yourself with patience."

Then the last bit of fine color that enters into this robe is the spirit of forgiveness. "Forgiving one another," says the apostle, "if any has wronged him." A man may bear and bear patiently and yet not have a forgiving spirit. I may allow you to insult me and by sheer dint of self-control refuse to say a word to you. I may be as calm as a piece of granite and yet be almost mottled within. But this forgiving spirit demands that I should not only bear, but that I should also forgive. Not once, not seven times, but to seventy times seven. That is, endlessly. That is the way Christ forgives. That is the way love forgives. Therefore, since I wear the garment of love I am to be clothed to-day and every with a forgiving spirit.

And now, my brethren, do you not see that all that is needed to make this earth of ours an anteroom to Heaven is for each of us to clothe ourselves in this winsome costume? Do you not see that a newer and fairer Eden would come to this tear-soaked and hate-torn world if only we, who name the name of Jesus, would really clothe ourselves day by day in the fascinating garments of love? And remember that it is our privilege to do just this. Not only is it our privilege, but it is our solemn obligation. The apostle does not say to us, "Make this garment." He says, "Put it on." That is all that is necessary. It is not supposed that we make it. No fingers are cunning to weave such fabrics but the fingers of our God. He weaves these magic garments and puts them at our disposal. All we have to do is by faith to claim them.

" Covet only," says the apostle, "the best gifts." But what is the best? There are many gifts that God puts at our disposal. What is the supreme gift? The gift of eloquence? No. The gift of wisdom? No. The gift of faith? No. What is the supreme gift? Listen: "Now there abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." That is the best gift that even the infinite God can give and He gives it freely and gladly. Claim it, heart. Claim it now, and go walk the remaining days of your life clad in the glorious garments of love.