

The Love of Christ.

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." - Eph. iii. 18.

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Christianity is essentially the religion of hope, a joyful hope eternal in its fulfilment. The secret but ever flowing spring of this abiding hope is the love of Christ who gave Himself for us, the just for the unjust that we might live through Him and be ever in His presence.

The love of Christ which passeth knowledge can yet be known, though in a very small way, by our human understanding. Such is the thought with which S. Paul concludes this passage



which is indeed the climax of his doctrinal system.

"To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," is one of the most striking of St. Paul's paradoxes. But, like the others, it is even literally true. All the love of Christ - what He did for love's sake and why He did it, passes human understanding, but we may know something of it, and shall know more & more according as we are more strengthened by His Spirit, & enlightened by faith, rooted and grounded in love.

The Love of Christ: -

In the first place note its reality.

The love of Christ is not an abstract conception



it is not even a mere mental phenomenon,  
it is a living force ~~exercised~~ by  
working through  
a living Personality.

Of this we have evidence in the  
three books of God's revelation, nature,  
history, the Bible.

The world of nature - birds, beasts,  
and trees, and everything that lives and  
grows - gives abundant instances of  
Divine providence, of loving care and  
thoughtful foresight, <sup>on the part of the Creator.</sup> The birds are fed  
the lilies grow and the sun shines and  
the rain falls on all alike.

The Bible is full of the love of  
God to mankind. The gospels speak to us  
of Him who went about doing good, whose



life was a practical exposition of His  
boundless love. He took our flesh upon  
Him, nay, He humbled Himself and  
became obedient even unto the death of  
the cross laying down His own life for  
us, the innocent for the guilty, that He might  
purchase us unto Himself, winning for  
us eternal life. Thus our Lord's ~~death~~  
Passion gives point to those words of  
Scripture, <sup>uttered by Himself</sup> - Greater love hath no man than  
this, that a man lay down his life for  
his friends." (John XV. 13). If we believe  
the Bible we must be convinced that  
the love of Christ was a real living  
power.



History confirms this view. The love of Christ has been the constraining motive of every Christian missionary or pastor since the time of Our Lord. The long roll of the saints who are known <sup>to us</sup> and the ~~numble~~ numberless army of those who are now forgotten, these testify to the living reality of Christ's love as a motive force in human lives.

And this force is as living and powerful as ever it was. The love of Christ is working in our midst today. We see the signs thereof in the extension of Christ's Kingdom among the heathen abroad and in the unwearying efforts to convert the heathen at home.



The love of Christ that ~~worked~~ healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, that cured the lame and cleansed the leper, that fed the <sup>multitudes</sup> ~~hungry~~ and raised the dead, in the land of the Jews nineteen hundred years ago, works its moral miracles among us today. I have known drunkards who have become sober, thieves who have become honest, vicious characters who have been raised from the slough of moral corruption by the power of Christ's love. It has done more than this, it has roused many from a life of mere self-seeking, of slothful, or it may be contemptuous, indifference to spiritual things, to take a keen personal interest, not merely



in their own personal salvation but in the  
bodily and spiritual welfare of others.

What mean these hospitals & dispensaries,  
these nursing institutions, these orphanages and  
ragged schools, these almshouses and poor-funds,  
the hundred and one ways in which men  
moved by the love of Christ working in them  
a love for Christ, are trying to show forth that  
love in their lives by serving their  
fellow men? <sup>Does</sup> ~~Do~~ not the love of Christ  
appeal to us as a real, living, present-day  
force, a <sup>clear</sup> ~~patent~~ fact of our daily experience  
when we see all these signs of its  
workings in our midst?

Secondly, having grasped the



essential reality of Christ's love let us consider its redeeming power in more detail.

Now this redeeming power of Christ's love is a personal matter for each one of us. To know the love of Christ not only signifies that we have to grasp the reality of the fact of His love, it means that we have to enter into personal relationship with him.

The first stage of this relationship is that of sinner and Saviour, I, the sinner & He, the Saviour. I must awake to my need of a Saviour, so must you, my friends. If we stand on our own merits before our Almighty Judge we are lost. We cannot



9  
save ourselves. We may work for our salvation  
but we cannot hope to earn it by our own  
efforts. However respectable we may be in  
the sight of our neighbours, that respectability  
will not pass muster before the all-seeing  
Eye of Him who requireth perfection in  
the inward parts. In the sight of God all  
~~have~~ are sinners and all need a Saviour. And  
the love of this Saviour is so all-embracing  
that he welcomes everyone, however bad  
(~~or however good~~). All the sinner has to do  
is to open his heart to that love, to  
submit his will to the Divine Will that  
desireth ~~that~~ him to turn from his wickedness  
and live. Christ, of his great love has  
promised forgiveness to all who ask. Let  
us take him at his word and cry with



10

the leper "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst  
make me clean" and he will cleanse us.  
Our part is to believe, to put our  
trust in him. He will do the rest.

We are saved by faith, by personal confidence  
in his Word. Confide yourself to your  
Redeemer and Lord who is capable of meeting  
your great need, and doing so, you will enter  
into a position of forgiveness, and more than  
forgiveness - of acceptance with God. This  
is what is known as justification, the  
first stage in the work of redemption.  
Sinner, accept the Saviour who offers himself  
freely to you, and God will then accept  
you as His redeemed child. The first  
shall live by faith. You are accounted



righteous before God because of your faith, whereby you have put yourself into touch, as it were, with your Saviour. This contact of your faith is the personal confidence of your awakened soul on the ground of divine truth and promise. Your Redeemer's love for you has ~~to~~ moved him to perform the work of redemption, to win for you salvation. Your part is to accept his free and gracious offer taking Him at His word.

The second stage is that of sanctification. Having entered into personal relationship with Christ by accepting Him as your Saviour, you are to make that personal relationship closer and closer. You have already begun to know the love of Christ, your plain duty is to



increase that knowledge. By accepting Christ as your Saviour you have taken His name upon you and become his bondsman, as it were, for He has purchased you unto Himself, <sup>yet</sup> ~~but~~ His service is not a slavery unto death but a joyful preparation for eternal life & happiness.

Yet in this work of Sanctification, performed as it is by the continual working of the grace of God in your hearts, there is growth. Men do not <sup>usually</sup> become saints all at once. The Christian life is one of constant struggle, of constant watchfulness but its outlook is hopeful. A true Christian is of necessity an optimist, not in the narrower sense of <sup>merely</sup> looking at the best side of things, but in the wider signification of an ultimate certainty of success, an assurance that all things work together for good.



~~We have~~

The love of Christ is not only a real living force, it is not merely a redeeming power, it supplies us with sanctifying grace.

Christ will not only save us, He will keep us. We must put our whole trust in him. Our faith must never falter, we must always trust our Lord's word & power. We must enter into daily communication with him and use his appointed means of grace. Our part is to believe and to act on ~~the~~ our belief.

This brings us to a few of the practical results of knowing the love of Christ. Let us keep this love in our minds for love begets love and feeds itself thereon. Pray regularly and frequently, not ~~in mere forms of~~ <sup>with mere mechanical</sup> repetitions but with thoughts fixed on God and hearts



14  
lifted up to Him, and be sure your prayers will  
be answered.

Pray to know more of the love of Christ.  
Ask Him to dwell and abide in your heart.  
Above all pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit  
to strengthen you in the inner man and to  
increase your knowledge of the love of Christ.  
Then will the Spirit of God abide with you,  
dwelling in your heart and teaching you  
more and more of the love of Christ which  
passeth knowledge, that you may be filled  
with all the fulness of God.