



Volume 81 No.2 MELBOURNE, MARCH / APRIL 1998 “THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINS US”

“That He (the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. “ (Eph. 3:16-19)

In these words, the apostle sets before us the extent of the love of Christ, its breadth and length and height and depth. This is one of the precious truths of God’s Word that has been brought to our attention in the last days, not only as to what Christ has already done for us in His coming into our world, His life, death and resurrection, but also as to the extensiveness of the results of that work, still to be revealed when He takes up His great power to reign. The scope of Christ’s love is, of course, a reflection of the Father’s love, for He so loved the world that He gave His Son to be its Saviour. Such an all-encompassing love can hardly fail to bring forth ‘all our heart’s deep thankfulness’.

After speaking of the extent of the love, the apostle goes on to speak of his desire that, as well as recognising its scope, they might personally come to know it, to feel it, to experience it and to rejoice in that love, which he says passes or surpasses knowledge. The context would indicate that Paul is here telling us that to really know the love of Christ we must have a first-hand experience of it in our lives. Something of this thought comes through in the testimony of Job after his long experiences and testings under Divine permission. In it all, he has learned the reality of God’s over-ruling care and can say ‘I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee.’

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Others could tell us of the many ways in which they have come to know and be blessed by the love of Christ operative in their lives and this may well impress and move us, but until we know that love for ourselves, by personal experience, by its effect on our lives, we will not really know the love of Christ, nor will that love constrain or motivate our actions. It is therefore only to those who have tasted of that experience that Paul’s words of our title are addressed. The passage from which they are taken reads -

“Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. “ (2 Cor. 5:13-18)

“ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW”

The context of Paul’s words is his concern as to the way in which he might minister the gospel to the brethren at Corinth, but his motivation and his methods, as a result of the “constraining” or “compelling” (NIV) love of Christ, are true for all of God’s children. The “love of Christ”, which the Word of God has shown us to be all-embracing, too vast for mere words to express adequately, and which we have experienced in our lives since we came to know Jesus as Saviour and Lord, is now to have a controlling power in our lives. This is, of course, in addition to a responsive love in our own lives, for how could such love as Christ’s fail to move any who have experienced it. Paul indicates how it lead him in Gal. 2:20, where he refers to “the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me”. Paul could not forget or undervalue that love and it was the momentum for his life of service.

Looking at the word “constrained”, we find that it is translated from a Greek word that basically has the thought of pressure, applied from outside, sometimes in a purely literal sense, e.g. the multitudes pressing about Jesus, but elsewhere in the sense of mental pressure. Our Lord’s words in Luke 12:50 are significant - “I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished”. How greatly I am constrained, how I must go on, He is saying, until all the necessary details of my life and sacrifice are completed.

Though a different, but related expression is used, Paul says in 1 Cor. 9:16, in relation to his preaching of the gospel, that “necessity” is laid upon him, he is constrained or bound to continue his labours for his Lord. So the apostle is speaking first-hand of the constraining or compelling or driving force of the love of Christ. The word used in our text can sometimes have the idea of “binding together”, usually to compel a desired action or situation, but the unifying effect which the love of Christ should have among the Lord’s brethren should certainly be one outcome.

OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS

From our reading in 2 Cor. 5, we note that the apostle is making several points which are linked to the central theme of the passage, the constraining love of Christ -

Verse 14 - The love of Christ lead Him to offer up His life to redeem mankind and Paul says - “we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead”. Who died for all? *“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”* (Rom. 8:33-35) Our present condition -no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus -derives from His death upon the cross and His resurrection. This is the supreme exhibition of His undying, unfailing and inalienable love.

Verse 15 - The objective of this act of love on our Lord’s part was that those blessed with life in Him should no longer live for self but for their Saviour. Here is the response to the love of Christ which is the Father’s will for all His children. So Christ’s love changes our direction in life from self-centred to Christ-centred.

Verse 16 - The result of this change of direction reflects also in our relationships with others of God’s children. “Henceforth we know no one after the flesh”. This may seem strange at first, since we all are still in the flesh, still very human - our change into the full likeness of Christ awaits the faithful completion of the race set before us, even unto death. The next verse helps us to understand how we should regard one another.

Verse 17 - “If anyone be in Christ, he (or she) is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new”. This is the new standpoint which we are to have as we deal with one another of the Lord’s people. To be “in Christ” means that we are fully trusting in Him, have given our lives over to Him in obedience, to be used in joyful service to His glory; that we are being daily developed by the working of the Holy Spirit within us to be progressively made more and more into the likeness of our Lord.

So we are not to look on others for the faults which, if we look hard enough, we will probably detect, or think we detect, but at the heart’s desires and aspirations, conscious only too well of our own shortcomings and the charitable judgment which we ourselves so sorely need. We need to be looking to see Jesus in each dear brother and sister, and, if we do look, we will see Him there. But for each of us the very personal question is - Do others see Jesus in us?

Even the world at times may see something of Him in us if we are true to our Master. “Now when they (the Jewish rulers and others) saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were ignorant and unlearned men, they marvelled and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus”. (Acts 4:13) Is this true of us, when we are put to the test? We recall also the testimony of Stephen, seen by many of the Jewish Council, including a young man by the name of Saul - “All that sat in the Council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face, as if it had been the face of an angel”.

“Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new”. (Verse 17) It is in this context that we are to relate to our brethren, for we are all surely seeking to walk in newness of life, that is, with our eyes fixed upon Him who is our life. Furthermore, it is in this context that we are to be fully yielded to the constraining love of Christ. This should, naturally, influence every aspect of life, dealings with family, friends, neighbours, all with whom we have needful day-to-day business, and so on, but it is vital in our relationships with the household of God, the household of faith.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

The apostle John tells us, in effect, that the measure of our love for the brethren will be a very clear indica-

tor of the reality or otherwise and the extent of our love for God. "If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20) Likewise, our appreciation of and response to the constraining love of Christ will be demonstrated in the love which we in turn show first and foremost to His followers. So we would expect the love of Christ, which has so enriched our own lives, to be reflected in our dealings with fellow Christians.

Our Master's commandment to His disciples was explicit - "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another". (John 13:34,35) This matter of love within the family of God, among the Lord's brethren, is not something optional, and not something discriminatory - i.e. to merely love those who love us, who think as we do, who are of similar nature, interests, etc. The requirement is that we love all who are brethren in Christ, remembering His words - "One is your Master, all you are brethren". (Matt.23:8)

The love of Christ should indeed be the compelling, motivating force in every aspect of our new life in Him, expressing itself in greater love and zeal for our Master, for the brethren, for the truths of God's word and in our daily dealings with those about us. The apostles in their letters to the various churches and individual brethren give us much instruction on these lines. It is easy to be impatient even with those we love, in the natural family or in the family of God. Forbearing one another in love is the only answer. Some of us find it hard to be patient or longsuffering and need often to recall that our Heavenly Father has shown great patience and forbearance toward us.

Peace would surely be a prerequisite for unity among the brethren, for harmony, or for effective fellowship in any church or gathering of God's people. Our Saviour pronounced a special blessing upon those who actively strive for peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God". (Matt.5:9) Paul further tells us - "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace and things whereby we may edify one another". (Rom.14:19) "*Speaking the truth in love, (you) may grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ.*" (Eph.4: 15) "The two components - 'truth' and 'love', both need to be constantly adhered to.

So then we might ask ourselves again -

(1) Have we fully comprehended the breadth and length and depth and height of our Saviour's love, the love that constrained Him to leave the heavenly courts of glory to share our estate, to suffer and to die, not only that we might have life in Him, wonderful as this is, but that we may have a share in the blessing of all mankind in due time?

(2) Is the love of Christ the constraining, motivating, impelling force in our lives as Christians, leading us on into responsive love for Him, for His service, for the Word of God? Is the love of Christ daily binding us more securely to Him, is it drawing us ever closer in love to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Higher Ground

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."
My heart has no desire to stay,
Where doubts arise, and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where these abound,
My constant aim is higher ground
Beyond the mist I fain would rise,
To rest beneath unclouded skies;
Above earth's, turmoil peace is found,
By those who dwell on higher ground.
I long to scale the utmost height,
Tho' rough the way and hard the fight;
My song, while climbing, shall resound,
Lord, lead me on to higher ground.

Lord, lead me up the mountainside,
I dare not climb without my Guide;
And, heaven gained, I'll gaze around,
With grateful heart from higher ground.
Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on heaven's tableland;
Where love, and joy, and light abound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher found.

(J Oatman Jr./A R Habershon)

THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH

(1 Peter 1:5-8)

Though we know there must be trials, and there will be tears below,
Yet we know His glorious purpose, and His promises we know!
Only ask—"What saith the Master?" and believe His word alone,
That "from glory: unto glory" He shall lead, shall change His own.
Each Amen becomes an anthem, for we know He will fulfil,
All the purpose of His goodness, all the splendour of His will,
Only trust the living Saviour, only trust Him all the way,
And your springtime path shall brighten to the perfect summer day.

—F. R. Havergal.

The Ascent of the Mount of God

(The Necessity for Keeping Close to the Master)

(Continued from previous issue)

(Having dealt with the equipment needed by the would-be climbers - the clothing, the knapsack, the alpenstock and the cord which binds climbers to the Guide and to each other, the author now considers whether there are reasonable grounds for faith in the Guide and the ascent itself)

THE GUIDE'S QUALIFICATIONS

(1) Has Christ the necessary *experience*? Yes, our Master knows every inch of the way. He has trod it himself, for we are told "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2: 10). Through the bitter lessons of practical experience, he is well acquainted with all the difficulties of the way. He was "in all points tempted like as we (the members of his body) are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15), and thus "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2: 18).

(2) A man may have trod the way and so have experience, but this does not necessarily imply that he is wise. Accordingly, a second necessary qualification in an efficient guide is *wisdom*, so that we may depend upon his judgment at all times and in all circumstances. Has Christ the necessary wisdom? Many tell us that the way Christ is leading us is the wrong way. They say, if you follow Christ in being humble and meek, denying yourself, giving up all earthly ambitions, and laying down your life in sacrifice, you will be very foolish. The Evolutionists tell us that man is simply evolving according to the "law of the survival of the fittest." The "law of the survival of the fittest" implies pushing others to the wall in order to succeed. There is not much comfort for the weak and helpless in that doctrine.

Some tell us that we have to depend upon a leader or the authority of the church. Surely a broken reed this to lean upon! Still others say that we should concentrate our attention on the health of our bodies and minds. Poor comfort this for those who are longing to please God and realize their own insufficiency. But it would be tedious even to enumerate all the various plans. You will find that they all direct you to yourself or to your fellow men. God's plan is best. He has given us Christ as our guide that we may follow in his steps. If you follow

him you will never be deceived, for “ in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2: 3).

(3) The next thing is his *strength*. You know how a guide has to help tourists in dangerous places and to raise them when they fall. Is our guide strong enough? Yes he is mighty to save. “He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7: 25). Christ says: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth “ (Matt. 28: 18).

(4) Is Christ *trustworthy*? Undoubtedly he is. He has guided many already, and he will guide us too. He who, because of his love for us, suffered for our sakes to the extent of giving up his life for us, surely he will lead us to glory if we are willing; and has not our Heavenly Father said: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee ? “

Then we know he is willing to undertake the duties of the important office. We need not ask the question. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5: 8, 9). Has not God said to us: “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psa. 32: 8), and he has appointed Jesus the Captain of our salvation.

THE ASCENT

Let us now talk about the ascent. Do you remember the time when we were down in the depth of the valley of the shadow of death, and Christ took us by the hand and asked to be permitted to become our guide. You remember the first thing he did was to get us to cast off all the filthy rags of our own righteousness, and clothe us with the mountaineering suit, the white robe of *His* righteousness, the only covering that can protect us while climbing the mountain of God. God forbid that any of us should be so ungrateful and so foolish as to throw it off! We should surely die the second death if we did. Then he bound the knapsack of the word or wisdom of God on our shoulders, putting into this knapsack, as already said, the bread of life, the water of truth, the wine of comfort and exhortation, and the oil of joy.

You remember how we eagerly grasped with mind and heart the divine precepts and promises and the privilege of prayer, which together form the threefold cord of love, and helped to gird ourselves with it to our Master and to one another, in order that we might keep close to Him and to each other, and so make sure to gain the summit of the mountain of God. We did not at first discern all the threads that make up the three strands of this golden cord, but we are seeing them and putting them to the test day by day as we are climbing higher.

Lastly, he placed an Alpenstock in our hand, called the power of God; and he told us that it was the mercy and loving kindness of our Heavenly Father which prompted the giving of the robe, the knapsack, the cord and the alpenstock.

When we had our outfit, we began the ascent. It was necessary for us to put forth some effort; but praise the Lord, we do not require to rely upon our own strength and righteousness. His grace is sufficient for us. *When we are weak, then we are strong*. There is no power like the power of the Lord for strengthening the feeble knee.

Everyone of us can remember the beginning of the ascent. We all rejoiced at the prospect of being free from the valley of the shadow of death and of reaching the glory of the mountain top. We were full of confidence in the Lord and the power of his might. Some of us rejoiced more than others. Some of us, perhaps, had a little confidence in our own strength, though now, I trust, we have learned better. Others of us, while rejoicing, did not rejoice sufficiently, because we saw so plainly our own weaknesses and we were fearful of ever successfully climbing the dizzy height. We were looking more to self than to our guide. However, we all did rejoice and were anxious that others should rejoice with us.

Have you ever climbed a high mountain ? The higher you ascend, the purer and rarer the air becomes, and when you fill your lungs with it and admire the beautiful scenery, your heart goes out to the Lord for gratitude, and you “cannot keep from singing.” That is how *we* feel. While we are ascending this high mountain of God, we feel often like bursting forth into “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in our heart to the Lord.” “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psa. 103: 1, 2).

DIFFICULTIES

It is only when we are going along the right way that we feel like that. If we lose the way, then it is not pleasant by any means. We do not feel like singing then. But there is no reason why we should lose the way. No doubt it is narrow, but if we take a firm grasp of our alpenstock, see that our robe is unspotted, and make sure that we are firmly bound by, and are following the leading of the threefold cord of love, we shall not go astray. “Greater is he that is for us than all that be against us.” So long as we are rejoicing in the Lord, and not in self, we can feel that we are safe and that victory lies before us.

Although the path is all narrow and difficult, some parts are more difficult than others. In some places we have to force our way through thorny thickets of sneers and ridicule which tear into our flesh and make us wince. Again, we are sometimes compelled to climb over or go round rocks of distresses and perplexities. At other times we require to creep along with a great mass of affliction overhanging the narrow way, and seemingly ready to fall on us and crush us. Now and again an avalanche of tribulation comes upon us, or we may have to pass through a blinding hailstorm of persecution or a thunderstorm of trouble. But if we keep close to the Master we are quite safe.

Occasionally we find a yawning crevasse of doubt in front of us, or a bottomless precipice of despair at our side. If we look down, we get giddy and may fall. What we should do in such circumstances is to turn our eyes away from the danger and look to Jesus. We should take a firmer grip of our alpenstock and our cord of love, and with the Lord's assistance the difficulties of the way will be overcome. In all circumstances of difficulty and danger, we shall experience great comfort and be much refreshed if we open our knapsack, the Word of God, and while partaking of its contents, praise the Lord for his bountiful provision for all our needs.

Occasionally our guide seems to get out of our sight or to be too high above us and we are apt to lose heart, but if we grasp the cord and follow its leading, our faith will be rewarded. We shall see our guide once more, and we shall find that he was near us all the time and that it was only the feeling of faintness which obscured our vision.

You are aware that in some high mountains glaciers are met with. You know how the guide does in these cases? He digs out a foothold for each step of the way. That is what Christ, our guide, had to do. While at all times it is advisable, in these slippery places it is imperative that we should watch carefully for the footprints of the Master, and place our feet firmly and securely in them, step by step. If we do this, the love and power of God will sustain us, and we shall not need to fear.

Now and again we see some of our companions slip with more or less disastrous results; or we may slip ourselves, and when we do, what a fright it gives us! What discomfort and pain! What a feeling of faintness and helplessness comes over us! And how solicitous our Guide and our companions are for us! How they brace themselves and draw us up to safety again by the threefold cord of love, beseeching us to keep firm hold of it all the time! When we are very faint, our Guide hooks his alpenstock, the power of God, into our girdle, and draws us up to the place of safety. If any of us rebel and loosen our girdle we shall be in danger of death, but if we attend to the divine precepts, and take encouragement from the exceeding great and precious promises, and lay hold of the Lord by prayer, we shall soon be drawn up to the place of safety, and walk once more in the narrow way.

After we have recovered our footing, we feel shaken by the fall; our knees tremble and our head and heart feel faint, but by the help of the alpenstock and the golden cord, the cord of love, we soon regain our confidence in the Lord.

It is also at such times the privilege of some of our fellow-travellers to anoint our bruises with the oil of joy, to offer us a refreshing drink of the water of truth, and to sustain us with a small portion of the bread of life and wine of comfort and exhortation. What a glorious privilege we have in assisting each other!

REVIEW AND REFRESHING

When we have partaken of these, our first feeling is gratitude for the loving kindness of our God, and for the sympathy and help of our brethren. We thank God that we are back in the place of safety, and we show our love and appreciation to the brethren for their help. But it is right for us to reflect on the cause of our fall in order to draw from it the necessary lessons. Generally it has been neglect of some of the usual precautions, neglect of the necessity to hold the cord (precepts, promises and prayers, the three P's), or the alpenstock (the power of God), or neglect of keeping our garment unspotted, or of walking carefully in the footsteps of the Master. It may be that we have been disheartened through lack of faith. We may have been thinking more of the difficulties and dangers of the way than of the love and power and wisdom of God.

It may be, again, that the slip has been made through over-confidence in self or in a fellow traveller. It is well to have confidence in each other, to trust and love and honour one another, and this the more we see in them the likeness of the Master. But we must never be betrayed into placing more confidence in our fellow men than in God. This is an important thing, dear brethren. No matter how learned a brother may be, or how much of the spirit of Christ he may show, God forbid that we should permit ourselves, like many, to place man's word above the Word of God. We are never to worship man. "One is your Master, even Christ, all ye are brethren." Sometimes God allows leaders to make mistakes in order to test us in that way.

In times of difficulty and distress the proper thing for us to do is to feel a spirit of dependence on the Lord, the expression of which will be the language of prayer from the heart, uttered or unuttered. As the Psalmist says: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses" (Psa. 107: 6). The weaker we are in self, the stronger we can be in the Lord. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not

dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness, for I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee: Fear not, I will help thee” (Isa. 41: 10, 13). With promises like these in the Scriptures, and they abound there, we need not fear, however difficult the way may appear.

Sometimes we are apt to become impatient and think we are unnecessarily long in reaching the summit, or that the difficulties we are experiencing on the way are too numerous, too great or too long-continued; but to feel like that would show a want of confidence in our God. He knows what is best for our spiritual growth, and for the interests of the truth. “Wait thou upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psa. 27; 14).

But the way is not all full of such difficulties. The Lord knows that we require breathing-spaces on the hill-side. Sometimes we get to a part where we can rest and refresh ourselves with the truth, and enjoy each other’s society for a little while—times of prosperity. We rejoice when we get to these places, but even there we should continue to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. Satan knows that in times like these we are apt to become less careful and slip unawares. But “the Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that are bowed down.” “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works (Psa. 145: 14, 8, 9). If we find our feet giving way under us, we should call on the Lord, for “the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth” (verse 18). We need not fear. All we require is faith.

THE PROSPECT

While we are up here near the summit of Mount Zion, we see opposite us on the other side of Jordan, the many-peaked mountain of Bashan (Psa. 68: 15,16, Rotherham). Christendom has thought to establish the mountain of God on earth by its own wisdom and power; but we know by the sure word of prophecy that it will soon fall. As we look, we see the foundations shaking and that mountain beginning to move; and all thinking men see the same. But while men’s hearts are “failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth,” we are not moved, for the rock on which we are standing will never be shaken. Mount Zion is “the hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever.” It will never be moved.

As we see the fulfilment of prophecy and realize that the time is at hand for the great earthquake, our hearts are sore for those brethren who are still in bondage. We long for them to strike off their chains with the Lord’s help, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and this longing makes us more and more zealous in our endeavours to obey the Lord’s request: “Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice” (Psa. 50: 5),

Soon we shall reach the summit where the wedding supper is being prepared, for our Guide is to be our Bridegroom. Soon the Bride will have made herself ready, and the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated. Let us pray for one another and so serve one another, that we all may be found worthy to be members of the Bride. Then when we are united with Christ in glory, drinking the wine anew with him in his and our kingdom, we shall be close, very close to the Master, and that for ever. Only a few years more and our climbing will be over. With some of us it may be only a few days or weeks. Pray the Lord that we shall all be faithful unto death so that we may get the crown of life (immortality), and never be separated from Jesus.

Remember, dear brethren, that the Lord is faithful who has promised. If we become separated from Christ, the separation will be due entirely to our own wilfulness, *nothing else*. As the Apostle declares: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

These trials must come to us, for it is only through much tribulation that we can enter the Kingdom; but if our faith is firm, *that faith which worketh by love*, these trials instead of separating us from the love of Christ, will make us see our own weakness and draw us the closer to him. As the Apostle goes on to say: “Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8: 35-39). AMEN.

(John Edgar, 1909)

GOD’S MERCY

There’s a wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in His justice,

Though severe His judgements be.
Search the Scriptures, search and see
Wisdom's wondrous harmony.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
Search the Scriptures, search and see
God's great kindness unto thee.

WORKERS AND WINNERS

Keep striving; the winners are those who have striven
And fought for the prize that no idler has won;
To the hands of the steadfast alone it is given,
And before it is gained there is work to be done.

Keep climbing; the earnest and faithful have scaled
The height where the pathway was rough to the feet;
But the faint-hearted faltered, and faltering, failed,
And sank down by the wayside in helpless defeat.

Keep hoping; the clouds hide the sun for a time,
But sooner or later they scatter and flee,
And the path glows like gold to the toilers who climb
To the heights where men look over landscape and sea.

Keep onward; right on, till the prize is attained;
Front the future with courage, and obstacles fall.
By those, and those only, the victory's gained
Who look not to self but to God above all

(Anon)

“CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER”

(1 Cor. 5:7)

“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor 5:7, 8)

THE ANTITYPICAL LAMB

In Jesus' day the time had come for the fulfilment of the antitype of the Passover. Jesus Himself was to be the Passover Lamb. By faith the merit of His sacrifice, His blood, was to be sprinkled upon the doorposts of His people's hearts, and His flesh, the merit of His earthly perfection, was to be eaten or appropriated by them.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, the antitypical Passover Lamb, was slain over nineteen centuries ago on the exact anniversary of the killing of the typical lamb. The sacrifice of Jesus needs not to be repeated, for by faith we all sprinkle the same blood today, in our hearts we feed upon the merit of the same sacrifice; we have the bitter herbs of trial and drink of His cup -sharing the Master's spirit and its reward of suffering for righteousness' sake.

Not many have appreciated these privileges during all the centuries, in all only a “little flock”. Nor are there

many who envy their present experiences or appreciate how great will be their reward and blessings in the life to come. Then, instead of suffering with Christ, they shall reign with Him in glory, honour and immortality.

“IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

Jesus, when about to begin the fulfilment of the type by dying as the antitypical Passover Lamb, instituted for His followers an annual remembrance, which in their minds would take the place of the type and continually remind them of the Antitype. Instead of the literal flesh of the lamb, our Master used bread, and for the blood, the fruit of the vine. Instead of any further commemoration of the type, He directed that these symbols be taken in remembrance of the Antitype, “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.”

Our Lord, as a Jew, was obligated to keep the typical Passover, eating of the literal lamb, etc., first, but after that final passover supper, He instituted with the bread and the fruit of the vine His substitutionary memorial of Himself, saying, “Take, eat, this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said, Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God” - that is, until His coming in power and great glory to receive the Church as His elect Bride and joint-heirs in His kingdom, to shower blessings richly upon Israel and through them upon the whole world of mankind.

“THE HOUR IS COME”

The hour for the betrayal was drawing near. The Master knew by some power unknown to us who would betray Him. Broaching this matter to the twelve, He said, “One of you shall betray me.” Each replied, “Is it I?” Even Judas brazenly challenged the Master’s knowledge of his deceitful course, and said, “Is it I?” The answer was, “It is as you have said -you are the betrayer.” The Divine program was thus carried out and the scriptures were fulfilled, including the declaration that Jesus should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, marking the Divine fore-knowledge.

“IN MY FATHER’S KINGDOM”

In giving the disciples the bread, which represented His flesh, and the cup, which represented His blood, the Master pictorially offered them justification and sanctification, and, as Paul explained, He did more than this - He offered them a participation with Himself in the sufferings of the present and in the glories of the future. (1 Cor 10:16,17; Matt 26:29) The antitype of the cup in its higher sense will be the new joys of the Kingdom which all the faithful in Christ will share with the great King of Glory, when He shall take unto Himself His great power and reign. (P.P. 3/4)

IN REMEMBRANCE”

In memory of the Saviour’s love,
We keep this simple feast,
Where every consecrated heart
Is made a welcome guest.
By faith we take the bread of life,
Which this doth symbolise,
This cup in token of the blood,
His costly sacrifice.
This cup shall e’er recall the hour,
When Thou didst set us free;
Soon with new joy in kingdom power
We’ll drink it, Lord, with Thee.
What rapturous joy shall then be ours
For ever, , with Thee!
Clothed with our resurrection powers,
Thine endless praise shall be.