



THE TRUE  
CHRISTIAN'S  
LOVE TO THE  
UNSEEN CHRIST

THOMAS VINCENT (1634-1678)

THE TRUE  
CHRISTIAN'S LOVE  
TO THE  
UNSEEN CHRIST

*A discourse chiefly tending to excite and promote the  
decaying love of Christ in the hearts of Christians*

*With an appendix concerning Christ's  
manifestation of Himself to them  
that love Him*

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,  
let him be Anathema Maranatha.  
— 1 Corinthians 16:22

Thomas Vincent

A quality hardback of this title is available from Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan: [www.heritagebooks.org](http://www.heritagebooks.org), 616-977-0889.

© Copyright 2017 Chapel Library: modernization; annotations. This edition substitutes modern verb endings and pronouns for the Elizabethan English of the original text, which is in the public domain. Printed in the USA. All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version. Chapel Library does not necessarily agree with all the doctrinal positions of the authors it publishes. Permission is expressly granted to reproduce this material by any means, provided

- 1) you do not charge beyond a nominal sum for cost of duplication, and
- 2) this copyright notice and all the text on this page are included.

Chapel Library sends Christ-centered materials from prior centuries worldwide without charge, relying entirely upon God's faithfulness. We therefore do not solicit donations, but we gratefully receive support from those who freely desire to give.

**Worldwide**, please download material without charge from our website, or contact the international distributor as listed there for your country.

In **North America**, for additional copies of this booklet or other Christ-centered materials from prior centuries, please contact

#### **CHAPEL LIBRARY**

2603 West Wright Street  
Pensacola, Florida 32505 USA

*Phone: (850) 438-6666 • Fax: (850) 438-0227*  
*chapel@mountzion.org • [www.ChapelLibrary.org](http://www.ChapelLibrary.org)*

Please see also *Sermon on the Nature of Love to God* by Seth Payson (1758-1820), *The Love of Christ* by Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843), and Free Grace Broadcaster 159, *Love*—all available from Chapel Library. The FGB is a quarterly digest of six to ten messages from prior centuries, all on one theme, with a different theme each issue. Request a subscription

– worldwide, eBook sent via email:

*[www.ChapelLibrary.org/broadcaster/fgb-subscriptions/](http://www.ChapelLibrary.org/broadcaster/fgb-subscriptions/)*

– in North America, printed copy sent via mail: write Chapel Library

– in a country with an international distributor, printed copy sent via mail; write to them directly:

*[www.ChapelLibrary.org/broadcaster/fgb-distributors/](http://www.ChapelLibrary.org/broadcaster/fgb-distributors/)*

# THE TRUE CHRISTIAN'S LOVE TO THE UNSEEN CHRIST

## Contents

To the Reader .....	5
Introduction .....	7

### **Part I The Doctrine Stated**

1. The Property of True Christians .....	12
2. The Object of True Christians' Love .....	14
3. The Love That True Christians Bear .....	16
4. The Property of All True Christians .....	18
5. The Duty of All True Christians .....	19
6. How Christians Ought to Love .....	20
7. Why True Christians Love Christ .....	22

### **Part II The Doctrine Applied**

8. Use One: For Information .....	27
9. Use Two: For Examination .....	30
10. Use Three: For Reproof .....	35
11. Use Four: For Exhortation .....	42

### **Part III Motives for Our Love**

12. What Christ Is .....	44
13. Christ's Love to True Christians .....	52
14. Christ's Benefits .....	59
15. The Love True Christians Have to Christ .....	64

### **Part IV Directions for Our Love**

16. How to Attain This Love When You Are without It .....	73
17. How to Attain This Love When Your Love Is Weak .....	81

18. Wherein to Show This Love for Christ .....90  
19. Conclusion .....98

**Appendix: Christ’s Manifestation of Himself  
unto Them That Love Him**

1. Christ Manifests Himself ..... 104  
2. Christ’s Love; Christ’s Word ..... 105  
3. How Christ Manifests Himself ..... 106  
4. When Christ Manifests Himself ..... 108  
5. Where Christ Manifests Himself ..... 110  
6. Use 1: To Those Who Have No Love to Christ..... 110  
7. Use 2: To Those Who Have Some Love to Christ..... 111  
8. Use 3: To Those with Manifestations of Christ’s Love ..... 119

## TO THE READER

Our Savior sent an epistle from heaven to the church of Ephesus, wherein He reproved her because she had left her first love, and threatened the removal of her candlestick: that He would take away her light if she did not recover her love. By the same hand at the same time, He sent another epistle to the church of Laodicea, wherein He reproved her lukewarmness and threatened—because she was neither hot nor cold—He would spew her out of His mouth (Rev 2:4-5; 3:15-16). And are Christians in England under no such sin, in no such danger? When some scoff at the flames of love to Christ like dogs that bark at the moon so far above them; when the most nominal Christians are wholly strangers to this love, whatever their notional knowledge be (the former looking upon it as but a fancy,<sup>1</sup> the latter having it only in theory); and when amongst those Christians who love Christ in sincerity, there are so few that know what it is to love Christ with fervor and ardency—when there is so general a decay of love to Christ in the land, Lord, what is like to become of England?

Have we not provoked the Lord to take away our candlestick (Rev 2:5), to suffer worse than Egyptian darkness to overspread us again and cover our light—because it shines with such cold beams, because the light of knowledge in the head is accompanied with so little warmth of love to Christ in the hearts of most Christians? Everyone will fetch water to quench fire in a general conflagration;<sup>2</sup> and surely there is need in a day of such general decay of love to Christ, that some should fetch fire, fire from heaven, and use bellows too—arguments, I mean—to enkindle and blow up the spark of love to Christ, which seems so ready to expire.

Reader, the following discourse, concerning the true Christian's love of the unseen Christ, is not finely spun and curiously woven with neatnesses<sup>3</sup> of wit and language. It is not flourished and set off with variety of metaphors, hyperboles, rhetorical elegancies, or poetical fancies and fragments. It is not adorned and fringed with the specious<sup>4</sup> show of many marginal quotations excerpted out of divers<sup>5</sup> authors. The discourse is plain; but the author has endeavored that it might

---

<sup>1</sup> **fancy** – imagination.

<sup>2</sup> **conflagration** – great fire.

<sup>3</sup> **neatnesses** – niceties; fine details.

<sup>4</sup> **specious** – deceptively attractive.

<sup>5</sup> **divers** – various.

be warm—his design being more to advance his Master than himself in your esteem; and if he have less of your praise so his Lord may have more of your love, his great end is attained.

The chief part of this discourse concerning the love of Christ is application, and about two thirds of it exhortation (there being generally in this knowing age more need of excitation than information)—where you have variety of arguments and motives to stir up and provoke unto the love of Christ, together with divers directions how to attain this love in the truth and strength of it, and wherein the strength of love to Christ should evidence itself. There is also an appendix added for further encouragement unto the love of Christ, concerning Christ's manifestation of Himself unto such as love Him. The whole discourse is practical, nothing in it controversial. Not only Protestants but Papists too will verbally acknowledge the obligation that Christians have to love Christ. And none will oppose this that are true Christians; none but Turks,<sup>6</sup> infidels, and devils are professedly against it. That this little book may be blessed by the Lord to be a means to warm and inflame your heart with love to the unseen Christ, is the earnest prayer of a hearty well-wisher to your soul.

—*Thomas Vincent, 1677*

---

<sup>6</sup> **Turks** – Muslims.

## INTRODUCTION

*Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now  
ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy  
unspeakable, and full of glory.*

—1 Peter 1:8

The life of Christianity consists very much in our love unto Christ. Without love unto Christ, we are as much without spiritual life as a carcass, when the soul is fled from it, is without natural life. Faith without love to Christ is a dead faith; and a Christian without love to Christ is a dead Christian, dead in sins and trespasses. Without love to Christ, we may have the name of Christians, but we are wholly without the nature; we may have the form of godliness, but are wholly without the power. “Give me thine heart” is the language of God to all the children of men (Pro 23:26); and “Give Me thy love” is the language of Christ unto all His disciples.

Christ knows the command and influence that love to Him, in the truth and strength of it, has: how it will engage all the other affections of His disciples for Him, [so] that if He have their love, their desires will be chiefly after Him; their delights will be chiefly in Him; their hopes and expectations will be chiefly from Him; their hatred, fear, grief, anger will be carried forth chiefly unto sin, as it is offensive unto Him. He knows that love will engage and employ for Him all the powers and faculties of their souls. Their thoughts will be brought into captivity and obedience unto Him, their understandings will be employed in seeking and finding out His truths, their memories will be receptacles to retain them. Their consciences will be ready to accuse and excuse as His faithful deputies; their wills will choose and refuse according to His direction and revealed pleasure. All their senses and the members of their bodies will be His servants: their eyes will see for Him, their ears will hear for Him, their tongues will speak for Him, their hands will work for Him, their feet will walk for Him. All their gifts and talents will be at His devotion and service.

If He has their love, they will be ready to do for Him what He requires. They will be ready to suffer for Him, whatever He calls them unto. If they have much love to Him, they will not think much of denying themselves, taking up His cross, and fol-



lowing Him wherever He leads them (Mat 16:24). Love to Christ, then, being so essential unto true Christianity, so earnestly looked for by our Lord and Master, so powerfully commanding in the soul and over the whole man, so greatly influential on duty, I have made choice of this subject of *love to Christ* to treat on. My chief endeavor herein shall be to excite and provoke Christians unto the lively and vigorous exercise of this grace of love unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Of such incentives, there is a great and universal need.

The epistle wherein my text lies was written by Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, and is directed to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1Pe 1:1). By these strangers we are to understand the scattered Jews, who were strangers in these several countries where they did inhabit. We read in Acts chapter two that there came up many of these Jews from these and other countries unto Jerusalem to worship. In the Temple, hearing the apostles speak with divers tongues—which were of use in the divers places where they did live, and that without instruction from man, but as the Spirit gave them utterance—they were amazed and confounded. And afterward, hearing Peter preach through the wonderful power of the Spirit, three thousand of them were converted by one sermon unto the Christian faith and added to the Christian Church.

When the Feast of Pentecost was over, these converted Jews returned into their countries, where their several dwellings, families, and callings were. [In these] countries, being heathenish and idolatrous, no doubt but there they met with opposition and suffering upon the account of the Christian religion, of which they became zealous professors—besides what they endured from their own countrymen: unconverted Jews who hated Christianity more than the heathens did.

The apostle seems to have a respect unto these in this epistle, wherein he encourages them under their sufferings for the sake of Christ by many consolatory arguments. In the second verse, he wishes that grace and peace might be multiplied in them and towards them; and then, though their sufferings did abound, that their consolations would abound much more. In verses 3-5, he blesses God for His abundant mercy towards them in begetting them unto a lively hope of the glorious and never fading heavenly inheritance that was reserved for them through God's infinite grace, and unto which they were reserved and kept through faith by God's infinite power.

In verses 6-7, he tells them—however they were in heaviness through manifold temptations, that is, afflictions, which are the world's left-hand temptations—yet he gives them to understand that these afflictions were but for a season: “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psa

30:5). They were but needful to humble them, to purify them, to crucify them to the world (Gal 6:14), to make them conformable to their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were for the trial of their faith that the truth of it might appear both to themselves and others, and that the worth of it might appear much more precious than gold when it is tried in the fire, which, carrying them through their sufferings, might be found both to their own praise and their Master's honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Then the apostle takes occasion in the text to speak of their love that they did bear unto this Jesus Christ, and of that unspeakable and glorious joy which results from believing in Him, although they had no sight of Him, which no trouble or affliction could overwhelm or hinder. "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Hence observe,

*Doctrine 1.* That it is the *property and duty* of true Christians to love Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen. "Whom having not seen ye love."

*Doctrine 2.* That true Christians do *believe* in an unseen Christ—"in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing."

*Doctrine 3.* That true Christians do, or may, *rejoice* in believing with unspeakable and glorious joy. "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Here are three great points to be treated of.

1. Concerning the *love* of Christians unto Christ.
2. Concerning the *faith* of Christians in Christ.
3. Concerning the *joy* of Christians in believing.

For the present, I shall speak only of the love of Christians unto Christ under the first doctrine. The other two I may have opportunity to treat of afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

*Doctrine: That it is the property and duty of true Christians to love the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen.*

In handling of this point, I shall speak

1. Concerning true Christians, who do love Jesus Christ.
2. Concerning Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen: the object of their love.
3. Concerning the love that they bear unto this unseen Christ.
4. Show that it is the property of true Christians to love Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen.
5. That it is their duty to love Him.
6. How they ought to love Him.

---

<sup>1</sup> It appears the author never fulfilled his hope of writing on Christians' faith and joy. If he wrote separate works, they have been lost.

7. Why they do love Him, where I shall give the reasons of the point.
8. Make some use and application (chapters 8-18).

*PART I*

*THE DOCTRINE STATED*

# 1. THE PROPERTY OF TRUE CHRISTIANS

*Concerning true Christians, whose property<sup>1</sup> it is to love Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen*

“Whom having not seen, ye love”—that is, you who are true Christians, who are so in reality as well as profession. And of these true Christians that do love Christ, the apostle gives a description in the second verse, where he calls them, “*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” True Christians are elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. They are such whom God, according to the counsel of His own will, according to His own purpose and grace, did choose from all eternity to be a holy and peculiar people to Himself, to glorify Him here on earth, and that they might be glorified by Him hereafter in heaven.

And this election<sup>2</sup> evidences itself in the sanctification of the Spirit. True Christians are sanctified, being separated and set apart from the rest of the world for God’s use and service. God has sealed them for Himself and hereby distinguished them from all others—the motto of which seal is this: “Holiness unto the Lord” (Zec 14:20). See a description of them in this respect, “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet<sup>3</sup> for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2Ti 2:21). They are purged from the defilement of sin, which pollutes and dishonors them; they are vessels unto honor, like those of silver and gold in a great house that are adorned with pearls and precious stones. They are adorned with all sanctifying graces, which are of more worth than the richest jewels. Hereby they are both beautiful in God’s eye and made meet for God’s use, being hereby prepared and enabled unto every good work.

This the apostle prays for on behalf of the Thessalonians: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be

---

<sup>1</sup> **property** – characteristic.

<sup>2</sup> **election** – God having, out of His good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life (2Th 2:13), entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer (Rom 5:21). (*Spurgeon’s Catechism*, Q. 19) See also *Whitefield’s Letter to Wesley on Election* by George Whitefield (1714-1770); both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>3</sup> **meet** – fit; suitable.

preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Th 5:23). True Christians are sanctified wholly, in their whole man, though they be not sanctified thoroughly; they are sanctified in every part, though they are not sanctified in the highest degree. Their whole spirit is sanctified—that is, the higher faculties of the soul, namely the understanding and the will. Their understandings are enlightened by the Spirit unto a spiritual discerning both of good and evil, beyond what any natural man does or can attain unto. Their wills are bowed, or rather rectified and made straight, being inclined unto God and His Law. Their souls are sanctified in the inferior faculties, in all the affections belonging both to the concupiscible<sup>4</sup> and the irascible<sup>5</sup> appetite. Their liking affections of love, desire, delight, and hope are towards God and Christ and things above; their disliking affections of hatred, fear, grief, and anger are towards sin. Their bodies also are sanctified, being made members of Christ and instruments of righteousness: their eyes, ears, tongues, hands, feet, and every part being devoted to God and made use of for His glory.

Thus, true Christians are sanctified by the Spirit, and they are sanctified unto obedience. The graces that are wrought by the Spirit in their hearts do appear in the obedience of their lives. The course of their lives is a course of obedience unto the laws of Christ. They are sanctified unto obedience, and they are sanctified unto sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. God hath set them apart to be sprinkled with the blood of the immaculate<sup>6</sup> Lamb, Who takes away sin that they might be pardoned and saved. Such are true Christians, who love Christ, Whom they have not seen.

---

<sup>4</sup> **concupiscible** – that which is governed by a strong desire, especially fleshly lust.

<sup>5</sup> **irascible** – easily provoked to anger.

<sup>6</sup> **immaculate** – undefiled; in the case of Christ, free from original sin.

## 2. THE OBJECT OF TRUE CHRISTIANS' LOVE

*Concerning the object of true Christians' love, and that is  
Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen*

This Jesus Christ, Whom they love, is the eternal Son of God, the second person in the glorious Trinity, Who in time assumed our human nature, clothed Himself with our mortal flesh, lived like a servant in a mean<sup>1</sup> condition, died like a malefactor the cursed death of the cross—and all for our sakes, for our sins. He rose again the third day for our justification, ascended up into heaven after forty days, and there is set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high to make intercession for us, and to make preparation there for our reception into the glorious mansions and eternal habitations that are in the Father's house. He is called "Jesus," from a Hebrew word that signifies *to save* because "he shall save his people from their sins" (Mat 1:21). He is called "Christ," from the Greek word *chrío*, which signifies *to anoint*, He being anointed by the Father with the Spirit and with power to be Mediator<sup>2</sup> between God and man, to be the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church.<sup>3</sup>

This Jesus Christ Christians have not seen with the eye of sense. Indeed, some Christians in the primitive times, as the apostles who were of His family and other disciples who conversed with Him frequently, did see Christ with the eye of sense—but it was in His state of humiliation, when He was here upon the earth, not in His state of exaltation now [that] He is in heaven. Yet some have seen Christ after His ascension, namely, Paul at his conversion, and Stephen, the first martyr, before he died. But none have had a perfect sight with bodily eyes of the

---

<sup>1</sup> **mean** – low.

<sup>2</sup> **Mediator** – go-between; one who intervenes between two hostile parties for the purpose of restoring them to a relationship of harmony and unity; "It pleased God in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest and king; head and saviour of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified." (*Second London Baptist Confession*, 8.1) See also Free Grace Broadcaster 183, *Christ the Mediator*; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>3</sup> **anointed...Church** – Thus the name *Christ* corresponds to the promised Messiah ("Anointed One") of the Old Testament, the One promised by God to redeem, instruct, and rule His people.

glory that is upon Christ's body, the luster of which is so great that none can behold it in this state of weakness and imperfection and live. But whatever sight some Christians have had formerly, no Christians now have a sight of Christ's person. They have heard of Him with the hearing of the ear, but they have not seen Him with the seeing of the eye. They have seen representations of Christ in the sacrament, but they have never seen His person that is represented. They have seen His image upon their fellow Christians, but they have not seen the original from Whom this image has been drawn. Some Christians have been in Judea and seen the place where the Lord lived, and at Jerusalem and seen the place where the Lord died, and visited the place of His sepulcher, where the Lord for a time did lie, and they have seen the mount whence the Lord ascended. But no Christians now alive have been in Jerusalem and on Mount Zion that are above, to see where the Lord now is in His glory. It is this Jesus Christ Whom Christians have not seen that is the object of their love.



### 3. THE LOVE THAT TRUE CHRISTIANS BEAR

*Concerning the love that true Christians  
do bear unto this unseen Christ*

Love is the going forth of the heart unto the object beloved. The love that true Christians do bear unto Jesus Christ is a grace wrought by the Spirit in their hearts, whereby—upon discovery and believing apprehensions of Christ’s infinite loveliness and excellency, His matchless love, grace, and mercy—their hearts go forth towards Him in earnest desires after union to Him and communion<sup>1</sup> with Him, wherein they take chief complacency,<sup>2</sup> and this accompanied with a yielding and dedication of themselves unto His will and service.

1. *The love of Christians unto Christ is a grace* wrought in their hearts by the Spirit. It is a flower most sweet and fragrant; but there is no seed of it in the nature of any man since the Fall—it is planted in the soul by the Spirit of God. Love to Christ is a divine spark that comes down from above; a fire that is kindled by the breath of the Lord, Whose essence is love.

2. *The ground of this love to Christ* is the discovery and believing apprehensions of Christ’s loveliness and love. There must be first a discovery of Christ as a suitable object for love, and not a bare notion of this, but believing apprehensions of it: that Christ is infinitely lovely, superlatively excellent; and that His love is matchless and transcendent towards the children of men; that there is a treasury in Him, and a storehouse of all graces, and the most needful and rich supplies. Otherwise, there will be no going forth of the heart in love unto Him.

3. *The actings of Christians’ love to Christ* is in their desires after union unto and communion with Christ. It is the nature of love to desire union to the object beloved, especially of this love to Christ. And this union being attained, the desires are after communion with Christ, converse and fellowship with Him. No converse is so desirable as with the persons whom we most dearly love. And this communion being attained, there is chief complacency therein. The soul sweetly rests and reposes itself in Christ, and rejoices in His presence and love.

4. *The accompaniment of this love*, which true Christians have unto Christ, is a yielding and dedication of themselves unto His will and service. Lovers give themselves unto those whom they love. This accompanies the marriage union;

---

<sup>1</sup> **union...communion** – See Free Grace Broadcaster 214, *Union with Christ*.

<sup>2</sup> **complacency** – delight; satisfaction.

and such as love Christ, they are espoused and joined unto Christ. They give themselves unto Christ to be His and wholly at His disposal, as the wife gives herself unto the disposal of her husband.

## 4. THE PROPERTY OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS

The fourth thing is to show that it is the property of *all* true Christians to love this unseen Christ. True Christians are differenced and distinguished—not only from all heathens and infidels, but also from all bare nominal Christians—by their love to Jesus Christ. It is the property of covetous persons to love worldly wealth and riches; it is the property of ambitious persons to love worldly honor and dignities; it is the property of voluptuous persons to love sensual pleasures and delights—and it is the property of true Christians to love Jesus Christ, Whom they have never seen.

None but such as are true Christians love Christ, and all those that are true Christians do love Him. The loveliness of Christ appears not to the eye of sense, but to the eye of faith. They that do not see Him with this eye, they cannot love Him; and they that do see Him with this eye, they cannot choose but love Him. Such as do not love Christ, it is not because Christ lacks beauty, but because they are blind. Now, all true Christians have this eye of faith to discern Christ's excellencies; and none but true Christians have this eye. The essence of Christianity consists in believing. Reason makes us men, but faith makes us true Christians. Therefore, it being the property of true Christians to believe, it is their property also to love this unseen Christ.

## 5. THE DUTY OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS

*So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*

*He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

*He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

—John 21:15-17

The fifth thing is to show that it is the duty of all true Christians to love this unseen Christ. This will appear if you look into John 21:15-17. Peter was one of the boldest and forwardest of all Christ's disciples, but he had been too self-confident, which was the introduction unto and laid the foundation for his fall and thrice shameful denial of his Master. A look from his Lord put him in remembrance and brought him to repentance, with bitter weeping for his sin so soon as it was committed. After our Savior was risen from the dead, He appears unto Peter with other of His disciples, and in this place He asks the same question, in the same words, three times: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Whereby, as He tacitly upbraids him for his great sin in his three times denial of Him (which, had there not been a defect in his love, he would never have done), so He also gives a signification that love to Himself is the great duty, and the great thing that He looks for in all His disciples.

## 6. HOW CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO LOVE

The sixth thing is to show how Christians ought to love this unseen Christ.

1. *Christians ought to love Christ with sincerity of love*, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity” (Eph 6:24). It was the great sin of Judah that she turned not to the Lord with her whole heart, but feignedly<sup>1</sup> (Jer 3:10): so it is a great sin to love Christ with a feigned and hypocritical love. The love of Christians to Christ ought to be sincere in regard of the habit and inward workings of it. They must love Him not only in show, word, and outward profession, but their love must be cordial in the heart and so [be] a love indeed and in truth. And the love of Christians to Christ must be sincere in regard of the object of it: they must love Christ for Himself and not chiefly for what they get by Him. To love Christ only for temporal gain is hypocritical love. To love Christ chiefly for another’s gain is not so spiritual, but to love Christ for His own excellencies and perfections is most sincere and generous. This sincerity of love to Christ is everyone’s duty.

2. *Christians ought to love Christ with supremacy of love*; they must place Him in the highest seat of their hearts. He is a great king, and He looks for the throne, and that all creatures should be placed beneath Him and stand at His footstool. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mat 10:37). They are the words of our Savior. Christians may love father and mother; the laws of God and nature require it. They may love husband and wife; the Word of God enjoins the husband to love his wife as his own body and as Christ loved the Church. They may love sons, daughters, brethren, sisters, kindred, friends, yea, enemies—and they ought to do it. Yet all must be with a subordinate love. They must love Christ with their chief love; otherwise, they are not worthy to stand in the relation of disciples.

3. *Christians ought to love Christ with ardency of love*. “And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luk 24:32). This burning love Christ enkindled in the heart of His disciples, and this burning love Christ requires of all Christians. “Love is strong as death...the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it” (Song 8:6-7). Such a strong, vehement, ardent, flaming love,

---

<sup>1</sup> feignedly – insincerely.

Christians should have unto Jesus Christ, which all the waters of affliction may not be able to quench, which no floods of temptations or persecution may be able to drown and overwhelm. Therefore,

4. *Christians ought to love Christ with constancy of love.* Having begun to love Him, they ought to continue to love Him and to love Him unto the end. As they ought to be constant in their obedience and to persevere in their other graces, so they ought to be constant and to persevere in this grace of love to Christ.

## 7. WHY TRUE CHRISTIANS LOVE CHRIST

The seventh thing is to show why true Christians do love Christ, Whom they have never seen.

### **Reason 1: Their Need**

True Christians love Christ because of the need that they have of Him. Men love their necessary food, without which their bodies would starve with hunger. Men love their necessary raiment and habitations, without which in winter seasons their bodies would starve with cold. Men love their necessary friends, upon whom (under God) they have their dependence, and from whom they have all their subsistence. But nothing in the world, or friend in the world, is so needful to the body as the Lord Jesus Christ is unto the soul. As the excellencies of the soul are far beyond the excellencies of the body, so the necessities of the soul are far beyond the necessities of the body—which necessities can be answered by none but Jesus Christ. And, therefore, true Christians do love Him.

At first conversion, when they were convinced of sin, awakened out of their carnal<sup>1</sup> security, oh, what need had they, and did they see they had, of Christ! They perceived themselves to be lost, and that it was Christ only that could save them. They felt the wounds of conscience, and it was Christ only that could heal them. They feared the wrath of a sin-revenging God, and it was Christ only that could deliver them. The remission, reconciliation, and salvation that they had by Christ did lay the first foundation of a most endeared love unto Christ. And still they perceive a continual need of Christ to procure daily pardon for them and to convey daily supplies of grace unto them. When they are dark, they have need of Christ to enlighten them; when they are dead, to quicken them; when they are straitened,<sup>2</sup> to enlarge them; when they are weak, to strengthen them; when they are sad, to comfort them; when they are tempted, to succor them; when they are fallen, to raise them; when they are in doubts, to resolve them; when they are under fears, to encourage them; when they stagger, to establish them; when they wander, to restore them. Christ, and none but Christ, can do all this, and more than this, for them. And therefore, because of the need and usefulness of Christ, true Christians love Him.

---

<sup>1</sup> **carnal** – fleshly; unspiritual.

<sup>2</sup> **straitened** – restricted; confined.

## Reason 2: The Loveliness of Christ

True Christians love an unseen Christ because of the loveliness of Christ, which loveliness, though it be not and cannot here be seen by the eye of the body, yet it is evident unto the eye of faith. See the description that is given of Christ, the Beloved, by His spouse, the Church. The daughters of Jerusalem there enquire of the love-sick spouse, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?” (Song 5:9). Hereupon the spouse gives a description: “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand,” and after she had set forth his graces, beauties, and excellent accomplishments in metaphors taken from beauties in the several parts of man’s body (5:11-14), she concludes, “his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem” (5:15-16). The spouse is here acknowledged to be the fairest<sup>3</sup> amongst women. And not only by the daughters of Jerusalem, but her beloved, who had a more curious<sup>4</sup> eye, both commends her loveliness and admires it: “Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem...Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me...Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” (6:4-5, 10).

But what beauty is there, then, in the Beloved? If the Church be beautiful beyond all other of the children of men, how beautiful is Jesus Christ, from Whom the Church derives all its comeliness? He is said to be “white and ruddy”; that shows the beauty of His face. His countenance is said to be “as Lebanon” and like the lofty cedars thereof; that shows the majesty of His face. His mouth is said to be “most sweet”; and sweet it is indeed, in regard of the gracious words that proceed from it—no doctrine so sweet as Christ’s doctrine, no precepts so sweet as Christ’s precepts, no promises so sweet as Christ’s promises.

But to sum up all excellencies and perfections in a word, He is said to be “altogether lovely.” There is no person or thing in the world that is most lovely, which can properly be called *altogether* lovely. Many defects may be found in the most amiable persons, and much insufficiency may be found in the most desirable things; but Christ is “altogether lovely”: unlovely in no respect, there being no spot or blemish, no defect or imperfection to be found in Him. He is lovely in every respect; there is an incomparable and transcendent amiableness in Christ’s person in every regard.

---

<sup>3</sup> **fairest** – most beautiful.

<sup>4</sup> **curious** – careful.



In the person of Christ, the human nature and the divine nature are in conjunction: He is most lovely in regard of both. His human nature is compounded of body and soul. His body is most beautiful, a most glorious beauty and luster is put upon it. Whatever it were in His state of humiliation, be sure it has a glorious beauty now in His state of exaltation. It is called a glorious body (Phi 3:21). If the face of Moses did shine with resplendent glory after his conversing forty days with God in the Mount Sinai that was below, how does the body of Christ shine, which has been above sixteen hundred years in the Mount Zion that is above? I am persuaded that Christ's body is the most beautiful of all visible creatures.

But the beauty of Christ's soul does excel. No creature whatever has such shining excellencies as are in the soul of Christ. All the excellencies that are or ever were in any creature, are like a feather [when] laid in the balance with the exceeding weight of His glorious excellencies and perfections. Christ excelled the most excellent men that ever lived as to spiritual endowments when He was here upon the earth. He excelled Moses in meekness, Solomon in wisdom, Job in patience. And, how much does He excel now that He is in heaven? He excels not only the spirits of just men made perfect, but also the most glorious and holy angels, which never sinned. If any creatures have wisdom, it is but a beam: Christ is the sun. If they have goodness, it is but a drop: in Christ is the ocean. If they have holiness, it is but a spark or dark shadow: Christ is the brightness of His Father's glory. If they have the Spirit, they have Him but in some measure: the Spirit is given to Christ without measure (Joh 3:34).

Christ is most lovely in His manhood, so nearly united unto His Godhead—and how lovely is He in His Godhead! As God, He is equal in all glorious excellencies with the Father. Christ's Godhead implies excellency of being: He calls Himself "I AM" (Joh 8:58).<sup>5</sup> [It implies] excellency of glory, therefore called "the Lord of glory" (1Co 2:8) and "the King of glory": "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in" (Psa 24:7). This is interpreted by some to be spoken of Christ's ascension, and the angels and saints making way for His triumphant entrance and possession of His heavenly palace.

---

<sup>5</sup> "I AM THAT I AM" is the sacred name of God and His eternal self-sufficient being in the Old Testament (see Exodus 3:14). In Hebrew it consists of four letters: YHWH, which is termed *tetragrammaton*, from the Greek word meaning "four letters." "Yah-weh" is the pronunciation most widely accepted by Hebrew scholars. The Hebrews considered this name too sacred to be uttered by man. They filled in the consonants with vowels to make *Jehovah*. In some English Bible translations, the word is spelled with all capital letters (LORD) to indicate the use of the tetragrammaton in the original.

Many descriptions are given in the New Testament of this lovely person. I shall mention only one: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col 1:15-19). If we read, believe, and consider this great description of Christ, we must needs see and say that Christ is most excellent and amiable, and that no beloved is like to the Beloved of true Christians. Therefore it is that true Christians love Christ because of His loveliness.

### **Reason 3: The Love Christ Bears to Them**

True Christians love Christ because of His love that He bears to them. He loves them with a first love and with a free love. He loves them with a tender and compassionate love, with an active or doing love, with a passive or suffering love. His love is infinite, without bounds or limits; it is superlative, without comparison; transcendent, beyond comprehension; everlasting, without change, and which will have no end or conclusion. He loved them when they were polluted in their sins and washed them with His own blood. He loved them when they were naked in their souls, and clothed them with the robes of His righteousness. He loves them in their sickness and sorrows, and is their Comforter. He loves them in their wants<sup>6</sup> and straits, and is their Benefactor. He loves them in life, and is the life of their souls. He loves them at death, and is the stay of their hearts; and He loves them after death, and will be their portion forever.

There is great reason that true Christians should love Christ because of His loveliness; and there is further reason that they should love Him because of His love, especially when both are incomparable, both are incomprehensible. I shall further speak (God willing) unto both these with other reasons, under the motives in the exhortation [Use 4, chapters 12 and 13] to excite Christians to the love of Christ.

---

<sup>6</sup> wants – needs.

*PART II*

*THE DOCTRINE APPLIED*

## 8. USE ONE: FOR INFORMATION

[The first of four uses, or applications, is for information: to] learn that there are but few true Christians in the world because there are so few that love this unseen Christ. There are many Christians in name, but few Christians in deed and in truth. The time has been when openly to profess the name of a Christian argued true love unto Jesus Christ; I mean in the primitive times, when Christians were persecuted by the heathens—as in the ten first dreadful persecutions under the heathen emperors when the world was watered with Christian blood. Then, especially, at some times and in some—yea, most—places, whoever openly acknowledged themselves to be Christians exposed themselves unto imprisonments, racks, tortures, burnings, and the most cruel deaths. It was the truth and strength of love unto Jesus Christ that carried them through such great sufferings as many in those days underwent for the sake of Jesus Christ.

But now there are multitudes of bare nominal Christians; they call themselves Christians, being baptized in Christ's name; but they are altogether without love to Christ, Whose name they bear. Surely there are but few—not only in the Christian world, but even in England (where Christianity is to be found in as great purity as in any place)—that love Jesus Christ in sincerity.

No grossly *ignorant* persons do truly love Christ: such as don't know Christ, they can't love Him—*ignoti nulla cupido*, “there is no desire after, nor love unto an unknown thing.” An unknown evil cannot be hated, and an unknown good cannot be loved.

No grossly *erroneous* persons do truly love Christ. Such as do not receive Christ's truths, they cannot love Christ's person. “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (Joh 14:23). The words of Christ include not only the words of His precepts, but also the words of His doctrine. Such as err grossly, I mean in the fundamental truths of Christianity, they are no friends to Christ, but His enemies—so far are they from true love unto Him.

No grossly *wicked* persons do truly love Christ, such as profane persons, who blaspheme the name of God in their hideous oaths. The love of Christ teaches an holy awe and reverence of God's name, [but] such are persecutors of God's people for righteousness sake. How can they love the Head that hate the members? Christ accounts Himself to be persecuted in the persecution of His members: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Act 9:4-5)—and surely persecutors of Christ do not love Christ. Such are scoffers at

religion who deride holiness and mock at the name of a saint or godly person—whereby they evidently<sup>1</sup> show their contempt of the holiness of Christ, from Whom the saints derive all theirs. How can they love Christ that contemn<sup>2</sup> Him and His image.

No *unrighteous* persons do truly love Christ, whether they be so in regard of distributive justice<sup>3</sup> or in regard of commutative justice<sup>4</sup>; whether they be unrighteous in execution of judgement, in distribution of rewards or punishments; and whether they be unrighteous in their traffic and dealings.<sup>5</sup> Christ strictly requires justice and righteousness, and how can they love Him that do not keep this commandment?

No *covetous* persons do truly love Christ; the apostle says, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1Jo 2:15). And I may say that if any man love the world (that is, with his chief love), the love of the Son is not in him. Love cannot be chiefly set upon things below here on earth *and* upon Christ, Who is above in heaven.

No *licentious*<sup>6</sup> persons do truly love Christ: no drunkards, adulterers, or any that indulge themselves in unlawful delights. The love of Christ teaches us to deny such lusts and to mortify them.

No *mere civil persons* that are unconverted, [and] no *hypocrites* that have a form of godliness but are without the power of it do truly love Christ. The former may be loving and courteous unto men, but they have no love to Christ. The latter may profess love to Christ, and seem to love Him, but they do not really love Him. In a word, none who are under the reigning power of any sin do truly love Christ. The reign of sin is in the heart, and this is inconsistent with the love of Christ in the heart.

Now let us separate all these aforementioned persons from the rest: grossly ignorant persons, grossly erroneous persons, grossly wicked persons, the profane, the persecutors of God's people, the scoffers at religion, all unrighteous persons, all covetous persons, drunkards, adulterers, ...all licentious persons, mere civil persons, hypocrites, and all that are under the reigning power of sin—and how

---

<sup>1</sup> **evidently** – plainly.

<sup>2</sup> **contemn** – despise.

<sup>3</sup> **distributive justice** – justice in the allocation of resources and privileges among society's members.

<sup>4</sup> **commutative justice** – justice owed between individuals based on their individual interactions.

<sup>5</sup> **traffic and dealings** – trade and business affairs.

<sup>6</sup> **licentious** – unrestrained by law or morality.

few will there be left that do truly love Christ! And by consequence, there will appear but very few that are true Christians.

## 9. USE TWO: FOR EXAMINATION

Here you may know whether you are true Christians: by the trial of your love unto Jesus Christ. Examine yourselves<sup>1</sup> therefore, whether you love Jesus Christ, Whom you have never seen. The most in the world only love truly those persons and things that they have seen; but can you say that you sincerely and chiefly love Jesus Christ, Whom you have not seen? The love of the most arises from the notice that the eye gives to the objects beloved; but does your love arise from the notice that the ear has given by the Word of the amiableness that there is in Christ?

How may we know whether we have true love to Jesus Christ? You may know the truth of your love to Jesus Christ,

- A. By your desires after Christ's presence,
- B. By your prizing and frequenting those ways wherein Christ is to be found, and seeking Him therein,
- C. By your love of Christ's image,
- D. By your obedience to Christ's commandments.

### **A. By Desires after Christ's Presence**

First, by your desires after Christ's presence. Wherever there is a great love to any person, there is a desire after the presence of that person. Do you sincerely and earnestly desire Christ's presence? There is a twofold presence of Christ: 1) His gracious presence here, and 2) His glorious presence at the Last Day.<sup>2</sup>

#### ***1) Christ's gracious presence here***

There is Christ's gracious presence here: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (Joh 14:18). You desire that such friends and relations would come unto you, but do you desire chiefly that Christ would come unto you? Christ comes to His disciples a) in a way of gracious communication, b) in a way

---

<sup>1</sup> See *The Doctrine and Duty of Self-examination* by James Haldane (1768-1851) and *Marks of True Repentance and Saving Faith* by Jonathan Dickinson (1688-1747); both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>2</sup> **Last Day** – Judgment Day, when Jesus Christ will hold all men accountable for their sins. See *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758); and Free Grace Broadcaster 210, *Day of Judgment*; all available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

of gracious manifestation,<sup>3</sup> and c) in a way of sweet consolation that results from both.

*a). Gracious communication*

Do you desire that Christ would come unto you in a way of gracious communication? Are your desires after communication of spiritual light from Christ to teach and guide you, of spiritual life from Christ to quicken and encourage you, of spiritual strength from Christ to support you under burdens and enable you unto duties? Do you earnestly desire communications of all kinds, and further degrees of grace, out of that fullness of grace that is in Christ? Do you hunger and thirst after Christ's righteousness, not only that it may be imputed to you for your justification, but also that it may be more and more imparted unto you for your further sanctification<sup>4</sup>—that you might be brought and hereby wrought into a more perfect conformity and likeness unto Jesus Christ? This is an evidence of true love.

*b). Gracious manifestation*

Do you desire that Christ would come unto you in a way of gracious manifestation? "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (Joh 14:21). Do you earnestly desire the fulfilling of this promise: that Christ would discover to you more of the loveliness of His person and of the love of His heart? Are you grieved when your Beloved withdraws Himself, when the curtain is drawn and a cloud interposes between you and this Sun of righteousness, when He hides and veils His face from you? And do you long after Christ's returns, and the discoveries of Himself unto you?

"Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly. Be as a roe or young hart upon the mountains of spices. Leap over the mountains, and skip over the hills, and make haste unto my soul, which is sick of love for Thee in Thy absence from me. Oh, that I might see Thy face which is so fair! That I might hear Thy voice which is so sweet! That I might feel Thy presence which is so refreshing! Oh, that I might behold Thy heart-ravishing smiles!" Say, "Lord, that I am Thine, and Thou art mine; that Thou hast loved me, and given Thyself for me; that Thy love to me was from everlasting, and that it is unchangeable." Are these, or such like, the breathings of your souls? Such are the breathings of love to Christ.

*c). Sweet consolation*

Do you desire that Christ would come unto you in a way of sweet consolation, which results from this communication and manifestation? Are you desirous after

---

<sup>3</sup> **manifestation** – plain demonstration or revelation.

<sup>4</sup> See Free Grace Broadcasters 187, *Justification*, and 215, *Sanctification*; both available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



the oil of gladness, which Christ is anointed with—that He would give you of the unction of the Spirit, not only to sanctify you, but also to comfort you? Do you desire that your hearts might be filled with spiritual joys—the joys of the Holy Ghost, which are unspeakable and full of glory (1Pe 1:8)? Do you desire the comforts that Christ gives, beyond all the comforts that the world and the flesh can give?—the comforts that come in at the door of faith, beyond all the comforts that come in at the door of sense; those joys that are in Christ, beyond all joys that can be found in the most sweet and desirable creature-enjoyment? This evidences true love to Christ; thus do you desire Christ's gracious presence.

## **2) *Christ's glorious presence at the Last Day***

Do you desire also Christ's glorious presence at the Last Day? When He promises, "Surely I come quickly," can your hearts make answer as, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20)? Are you glad you live so near the end of the world that the Lord is at hand, that the coming of the Lord draws nearer and nearer every day? Can you lift up your heads with joy when you look towards the place where the Lord Jesus Christ is, at "the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb 8:1), and think with comfort that "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" much longer (Heb 10:37); that within a while Christ will "descend from heaven with a shout" (1Th 4:16), with "the sound of the trumpet" (Heb 12:19), and that your eyes shall see Him in the brightness of His glory and majesty? Do you look and long for the day of Christ's glorious appearance from heaven, when you shall be awakened out of your graves (where you may take a short sleep before) and be gathered together by the angels, and be caught up in the clouds, and there (in shining garments of immortality on your bodies and of Christ's unspotted righteousness in your souls) be brought with shoutings and acclamations of joy and triumph into His presence, Who will then acquit you graciously from all sin and punishment, own you openly for His faithful servants, crown you gloriously before the whole world, and receive you to live and reign with Him to all eternity?

Have you such desires as these? If some of you say you are afraid of Christ's glorious appearance, lest then you should be rejected because you fear you are not ready and prepared; yet, can you say also from your hearts that you desire above all things that you may be ready, that you endeavor to make ready, that it is your grief you are not more ready; and that if you were ready, and were assured of your interest in Christ, you could desire that Christ would come immediately; and that you desire no greater happiness and felicity than to live with Christ in glory; and that you account the presence of Christ in heaven to be the happiness of heaven? These are evidences of true desires after Christ's glorious presence and of sincere love to Christ.

## B. By Prizing the Ways wherein Christ Is to Be Found

Secondly, you may know your love to Christ by your prizing and frequenting those ways wherein Christ is to be found, and seeking Him therein. Such are the ways of His ordinances<sup>5</sup> both public and private. Christ's way is in His sanctuary, and in His ordinances He may be found. Do you give your attendance unto ordinances: public prayer, the preaching of the word, the Lord's Supper? And do you prize these ordinances because of the stamp of Christ's institution upon them, because of Christ's presence in them, and because they are a means of bringing you and Christ together?

And when you are under ordinances, do you diligently seek after Christ in ordinances? Do you rest in the outside and carnal<sup>6</sup> part of ordinances in meeting with God's people there; or do you design, desire, and endeavor after something more inward, spiritual, and incomparably sweet, that you [may] meet with Christ there, that you may have fellowship with the Father and the Son therein? And upon this account, can you say as David, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord!" and, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand" (Psa 84:1, 10), and, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psa 27:4)?

Do you also seek after Christ in your families and in your closets? Do you seek Him in secret prayer and meditation? Your love to Christ expresses itself in your desires. Your desires show themselves in your seeking after Christ in His ways.

## C. By Love of Christ's Image

Thirdly, you may know your love to Christ by your love of Christ's image: a) there is the image of Christ on His Word, and b) there is the image of Christ on His people.

*a. Do you love the image of Christ on His Word?* As Caesar's coin did bear Caesar's image and superscription, so the Word of the Scriptures, which is the Word of Christ, bears Christ's image and superscription. Do you love the Scriptures because of Christ's image that is upon them? Do you love the word of doctrine in the Scripture because of the image of Christ's truth and wisdom upon it? Do you love the word of precepts in the Scriptures because of the image of Christ's holiness upon it? Do you love the word of threatenings in the Scriptures because of the image of Christ's righteousness upon it? Do you love the word of promises in the Scriptures because of the image of Christ's goodness, grace, and

<sup>5</sup> **ordinances** – the Lord's Supper, baptism, the hearing of the Word, prayer, etc.

<sup>6</sup> **carnal** – physical.

love upon it? You have Christ's Word in your Bibles, and sometimes sounding in your ears, but does the Word of Christ dwell in your hearts? You receive Christ's Word in the light of it; do you receive His Word in the love of it?

*b. Do you love Christ's image on His people?* If you love not your brother, whom you have seen, how can you love your Lord, Whom you have not seen (1Jo 4:20)? All Christ's disciples do bear Christ's image. If you love the Original you will love the picture, although it be but imperfectly drawn. If you love the perfect goodness and holiness that is in Christ, you will love the goodness and holiness that you see in the saints, although they have it but in an imperfect measure. Do you love Christ's disciples, and that because of Christ's image, although they differ from you in some opinions that are circumstantial?<sup>7</sup>

#### **D. By Obedience to Christ's Commandments**

Fourthly, you may know your love to Christ by your obedience unto His commandments: "If you love me, keep my commandments... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (Joh 14:15, 21). You have Christ's commandments: do you keep them? You know them: do you practice them? Your love to Christ is known by your obedience unto Christ. If Christ be your Beloved, He is also your Lord; if you have true affection for Him, you yield subjection unto Him. If you love Christ, you are careful to please Christ. You are not the servants of the flesh, to take care to please the flesh; but you are the servants of Christ, to take care above all persons and all things to please Christ. If you love Christ, you are fearful of giving just occasion of offence unto men, but above all you are fearful of displeasing and offending your Lord. Do you labor so to walk that you may please Christ in the way of sincere and universal obedience? Are you hearty in your obedience unto Christ? Have you a respect to all His commandments? Is it your grief that you fall short in your obedience unto Christ? If you can say in the presence of the Lord—and your hearts do not give your tongues the lie—that you don't live and allow yourselves in the practice of any known sin, which Christ forbids, nor in the neglect of any known duty that Christ commands, this is a sure evidence of true love to Jesus Christ. Thus for the trial of your love unto Christ.

---

<sup>7</sup> **circumstantial** – pertinent but not essential.

## 10. USE THREE: FOR REPROOF

### A. Those with No Love for Christ

Of all such as have no love at all unto this unseen Christ, will not the use of information, together with the use of trial,<sup>1</sup> leave a conviction upon many of you that you are without this love? Suffer then the word of reproof. What! Are you creatures made by Christ, and made for Christ, and yet have no love to Him? Are you rational creatures? Have you souls capable of knowing Him and loving Him, and yet have no love? Are you Christians, and do not love Christ?—baptized in Christ's name, and yet have you no love to Christ's person? Are some of you professors,<sup>2</sup> and yet do not love Christ?—make a show of devotion, and yet without any true affection to the object of your worship?

Sinners, though you have not seen Christ, yet have you not heard of Him? And have you not heard enough to engage and draw forth your love unto Christ? What do you think: is there such a person as Jesus Christ, or is there not? Have you no Bibles? And if you have, have you not read therein the history concerning Jesus Christ? And what do you think of that history: is it true or is it false? Do you think the gospel to be a cunningly devised fable? Are not the Scriptures that contain this gospel the very Word of the true God, Who cannot lie? Are there not such characters of divinity upon them as are sufficient to evince their divine origin to any that search into them and do not willfully shut their eyes against the light that there shines?

And if it be so that there is indeed such a person as Jesus Christ (as there is nothing more true), how is it that you have no love unto Him? Do not the Scriptures reveal and set forth Christ as the most excellent and amiable person? And yet do you not love Him? Can you love persons and things that are but imperfectly lovely, and not love Jesus Christ, Who is altogether lovely? Can you love one of great honor that has but some inferior power and authority, and not love Jesus Christ, Who is the Lord of glory, Who has all power and authority both in heaven and earth? Can you love such as have wisdom and learning, though it be terrestrial,<sup>3</sup> and not love Jesus Christ, Who is the wisdom of the Father, Who knows all things, and Whose wisdom is divine? Can you love such as are liberal and bounti-

---

<sup>1</sup> **use of information...trial** – previous two uses; Use 1: many who profess to know Christ are not truly saved, Use 2: for self-examination.

<sup>2</sup> **professors** – those who profess to believe in Christ.

<sup>3</sup> **terrestrial** – earthly; natural.

ful, and not love Christ, Whose bounty is superlative and whose gifts are most rich and transcendent?

Can you love friends that are kind, and not love Jesus Christ, Who is the best friend that ever the children of men had? Can you love a benefactor that feeds you, clothes you, and gives money to you, and yet not love Christ, Who offers to feed your hunger-starved souls with the bread of life, to cloth your naked souls with the robes of His righteousness, and to give the spiritual riches of grace to you, the least dram of which is of more worth than all the riches of the earth?

Can you love riches and not love Christ, in Whom there are treasures and by Whom you may have not only spiritual riches here, but also the heavenly inheritance hereafter? Can you love honors and not love Christ, by Whom you may have the highest dignities, the honor of children to the King of heaven now, and a crown of glory in the other world? Can you love liberty and not love Christ, by Whom you may be made free from the slavery of the devil and your own lusts? Can you love safety and not love Christ, Who is the only Savior of mankind, and Who alone puts you in safety from the reach of the worst of enemies and the worst of evils? Can you love peace and not love Christ, by Whom you may have peace with God and peace in your own conscience? Can you love pleasures and delights, and not love Christ, by Whom you may have joys unspeakable and full of glory, besides those everlasting pleasures that are to come?

Without love to Christ, you are under the guilt of all your sins; neither your original sin nor any of your actual sins are pardoned. They all lie upon your own score, and you must answer for all yourselves—and how fearful is your account like to be! Without love to Christ, you are under the curse, not only under the curse of the Law for your breach of the Law, but also under the curse of the gospel for disobedience to this command of the gospel that requires you to love the Lord Jesus Christ: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha” (1Co 16:22)—that is, let him be cursed till the Lord come.

And when the Lord comes, will He take off the curse from you? No, He will come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon you, having threatened then to punish all as shall be found to have disobeyed the gospel with everlasting destruction—and what then is like to become of you? Sodom and Gomorrah, those wicked cities, will then be punished dreadfully with a worse fire than that which was rained down from heaven and consumed their persons and habitations together—I mean, with the fire of hell, which will be kindled and kept alive unto eternity by the breath of the Almighty. But you who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ—notwithstanding all discoveries of Him, invitations to Him, and offers of kindnesses by Him—you will be punished more dreadfully than the wicked Sodomites. It will be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for them than for you

(Mar 6:11). The torments of hell will be intolerable by any, but they will be most intolerable by gospel-sinners. The fire of hell will burn upon you the most fiercely, and the scourge of conscience will lash you the most furiously.

Consider this, all you that have no love to Christ; otherwise, when He comes to judgment, He will tear you to pieces and there will be none to deliver you (Psa 50:22). If you have not the sweet fire of love to Christ enkindled in your hearts here, you will be thrown into the dreadful fire of hell, which will burn you everlastingly!

## **B. Those with Some Love for Christ**

### ***1) The biblical record***

This reproves such of you as have some love, but it is very little love, to Jesus Christ. You that love Christ, is not your love very small, not only in comparison with the love to you, but also in comparison with the love that some Christians have attained unto? How strong was the love of the apostles unto Christ when they left all and followed Him (Mat 4:20)! Especially after the resurrection of Christ and His ascension into heaven, when the Holy Ghost was sent down and sat in the likeness of fiery tongues upon them (Act 2:3), oh, what a fire of love unto Christ was there then enkindled within them! Hence that bold profession of Christ that they make before the chief priests and elders (Act 4). Hence their rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, when they were beaten for their owning and preaching of Him (Act 5:41). The love of Peter and John was great unto Christ.

And the love of Paul was not inferior unto the love of the chiefest apostles; hence it was that he took such pains to preach the gospel in so many parts of the world, even from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum (Rom 15:19). See also how he approves himself to be a minister of Christ, and gives evidences of his strong love to his Master: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2Co 11:23-29), and "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for

Christ's sake" (2Co 12:10). The ground of all this was the love of Christ that did constrain him (2Co 5:14). He had such a love to Christ that he professes, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phi 1:21). Christ was his life, and his life was wholly at Christ's devotion.

But where is such love now to be found?

## **2) *The historical record***

I might speak also of the love of some ancient Fathers:<sup>4</sup> Ignatius, Polycarp, Jerome, and others. Take one instance in Jerome, who thus expresses his love unto Christ: "If my father were weeping on his knees before me, my mother hanging on my neck behind me, my brethren, sisters, and kinsfolk howling on every side to retain me in a sinful course; I would sling my mother to the ground, run over my father, despise all my kindred and tread them under my feet, that I might run unto Christ." How little is your love in comparison with the love of those famous heroes, those eminent martyrs, who have despised the flames and endured such racking and torturing deaths for the love that they have born unto Jesus Christ—the fire of their love burning stronger within them than the fire without them, in which their bodies were consumed?

Is not your love also small in comparison with the love of our late Reformers, which fired them with such courage and resolution as to withstand a whole world of anti-Christian fury and opposition? Is your love comparable to that of many eminent divines<sup>5</sup> and private Christians of our own nation of the age immediately going before, who are now asleep in their graves? But how few are there come up in their rooms?<sup>6</sup>

## **3) *The Christian culture today***

It is observed, and it is greatly to be lamented, that there is of late years a great decay in the power of godliness among those that are sincere; and is it not evident in the great decay of love even in true Christians unto Jesus Christ? Are not you dwarfs in comparison with others? Are not you babes in Christ, and weaklings in your love to Christ? Is it not evident that you have but little love to Christ when He is but little in your thoughts and meditations? The thoughts are the handmaids of the love; where the love is strong and ardent, there many thoughts will be attending upon it. But will not your hearts tell you that your thoughts of Christ are very few? You can think often of your food, but how little do your thoughts feed upon Christ, Who is the Bread of Life? You can often think of your

---

<sup>4</sup> **Fathers** – respected teachers in the early churches during the first centuries after Christ's death.

<sup>5</sup> **divines** – theologically learned men.

<sup>6</sup> **rooms** – places.

raiment, but how little do you think of the robes of Christ's righteousness? You can think often of your earthly friends, but how little do you think of Jesus Christ, your Friend in heaven? Objects of sense are often not only in your eyes, but also in your thoughts; but how little is Christ entertained in your thoughts, Who is the object of faith?

Moreover, does it not argue little love to Christ that you speak so little of Him and for Him in your converse one with another? If you had much love to Christ, would not this love breathe forth more in your discourses? You can readily speak of yourselves, and do often either directly or obliquely commend yourselves, which discovers your great self-love; how little do you commend your Lord and Master, and extol His excellencies with your lips! And does not this evidence that you have but little love to Him in your hearts? You can readily discourse of news and public occurrences (which is lawful and needful, so that due limits be observed); but when you leave Christ quite out of your discourse, it shows that you have not abundance of love to Him, because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak (Mat 12:34). Such as have much love to the world will speak of their riches; such as have much love to pleasures will be often speaking of that subject. Such as love their friends much will be often speaking and commending of them when they are in company, and when you speak but little of Christ, it is a sign that you love Him but little. Does not the little zeal that you have for Christ's honor in the world argue that you have but little love to Him?

Where is your activity for Christ to promote His interest among those relations and friends that you have acquaintance with? Do you labor all you can to bring others into the ways of God and into acquaintance with Christ? Besides, will not your little secret devotion argue your little affection unto Christ? Will not your closets or other retiring places witness how little you are in secret prayer and converse with Christ there? Brief and straitened prayer in secret does argue a heart straitened in love to Jesus Christ. Does not your backwardness<sup>7</sup> to the exercise of this love to Christ show the weakness of your love? How slow of heart are you to the love of Christ! How hard to be persuaded! You need not be persuaded to love your wives, if they be kind and helpful; you need not be persuaded to love your children, if they be pretty and hopeful; you need not be persuaded to love your friends, if they be friendly and faithful. And yet, whatever attractives of love, the most strong of any be in Jesus Christ. [But] you are backward to this love.

Need I say more to convince you that you have but little love to Christ? Will not your own conscience from these clear evidences sufficiently witness the thing?

---

<sup>7</sup> **backwardness** – unwillingness; reluctance.



#### **4) Consequence**

And now, Christians, think what a sin, what a shame, what a folly it is that you should have so little love unto Jesus Christ. If it be so great a sin for such as are strangers unto Christ to have no love at all to Him, that it brings them under the most dreadful curse, surely it cannot be a small sin that you (who are His true disciples) should have but little love unto Him. Is it not very displeasing to the Father that you should have but little love to His Son? If He does not hate you because of your relation unto Christ, yet is He not angry with you for the lukewarmness of your affection unto Christ—which sin is aggravated by the nearness of your relation?

Is it not dishonorable unto Christ that you should have so little love to Him? Don't you in effect say, "There is no great worth or amiableness in Him," when you have no great love unto Him? Are you not hereby ungrateful unto Christ, beyond what can be paralleled by any ingratitude unto the most obliging earthly friend? Is it not your shame that you should have so little love to Christ when He does so much deserve your love? Besides the infinite excellencies and perfections that are in His person, does not His infinite kindness unto you call for not only the truth of your love, but also the strength of your love? Think what He has done for you, think what He has suffered for you, think what He has purchased for you, think what He has promised to you, think what He has laid out for you, think what He has laid up for you! And yet to have but little love to Christ; yet to make such poor returns!

Moreover, is it not your folly to have but little love to Christ? Don't you hereby bereave yourselves, or debar yourselves of such peace as passes all understanding; of such sweetness and comfort both in the strength of your love and in the sense of His love, as is inconceivable? Is not injury and mischief unto yourselves the consequent of your little love unto Christ? Must you not draw on heavily in the ways of God, as Pharaoh when his chariot wheels were taken off (Exo 14:25)? Love to Christ is like wheels in your motion for Christ, and like oil to the wheels, which makes you ready unto any good work that He calls you unto. But when you have but little love unto Christ, you must needs be more slow in your motions, more sluggish in Christ's service. You will not, you cannot take that [which] pains in the work of the Lord, and be so zealous as you might and should be for your Master's glory.

To conclude, if you have but little love to Christ, you will be apt to faint in the day of adversity, to shrink when you are called to take up His cross and suffer for His sake. Lesser sufferings will discompose you, greater sufferings will frighten and amaze you, and you will be in danger of turning fearful apostates in time of

great trials. There is need of great love to Christ, as well as great faith, to carry you through sufferings with courage that you may persevere unto the end.

## 11. USE FOUR: FOR EXHORTATION

For exhortation unto the love of Jesus Christ, Whom you have never seen, this is the use chiefly designed in the choice of this subject, and which I shall most largely insist upon. In the prosecution of it, I shall give some motives and then some directions. The motives to induce and excite you unto the love of this unseen Christ may be drawn

1. From the consideration of what Christ is,
2. From the consideration of Christ's love,
3. From the consideration of Christ's benefits,
4. From the consideration of that love which Christians have, and should have, unto Christ.

The first sort of motives may be drawn from the consideration of what Christ is, and that in: A) What He is in Himself, B) What He is to the Father, and C) What He is unto true Christians.

*PART III*

*MOTIVES FOR OUR LOVE*

## 12. WHAT CHRIST IS

### A. What Christ Is in Himself

#### 1) *Christ's Desirability*

Consider what Christ is in Himself. In general, He is the most amiable person and the most suitable object for your love. If you ask of the days that are past, since the day that God created man upon the earth; if you seek from one side of heaven unto the other; if you make enquiry into all the parts of the earth—you will never find that either there ever was or is to be found any person so lovely, so beautiful, and so every way deserving your love as the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a matchless, transcendent, and incomparable beauty and excellency in Him.

How passionately are some foolish men in love with the external beauty that they see in some women: the exact symmetry of parts and comely proportion of the body, the amiable features and lovely mixtures of colors in the face, the beauty of the eyes, in their spirit their quick and graceful motions and amorous glances. How does this ravish the hearts of some fond lovers!—although the most beautiful body in the world is no better than painted clay, dirt, and corruption enclosed in a fair skin, which sickness will cause to look pale and wan, and death will quite mar and spoil.

But the amiableness and beauty of Christ is more transcendent and permanent, and therefore a more fit object for your love. Christ is fairer<sup>1</sup> than the children of men; He is all fair without any spot, altogether lovely without any blemish or deformity. I have already spoken of the glorious beauty that is in Christ's glorified body, the most lovely of any visible creature that God has made; and also of the shining excellencies that are in Christ's glorified soul, so nearly joined to the divinity. Could we suppose all the loveliness that ever was seen or found in the most lovely persons that ever lived, to meet in one person—how lovely would that person be! Yet such beauty, though never so resplendent, would be but a dark shadow compared with the brightness of Christ's most beautiful person.

Can you love the imperfect beauty that you see in creatures, and will you not love the perfect beauty that there is in Christ? Can you love a fading beauty, which soon withers like the flower, and will you not love Christ, Whose beauty never decays, but always abides more fresh than beauty in the flower of youth?

---

<sup>1</sup> **fairer** – more beautiful; more attractive.

Can you be soon affected with beautiful objects that are before the eye of your sense, and will you not be affected with this far more beautiful object, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is so clearly discernable by the eye of faith? If the eye of your faith were open and clear to look upon the transcendent amiableness that is in Christ, you could not choose but to love Him. Could you see the glances of His eye and the sweet smiles of His lovely face, as some have seen, your hearts would be overcome and ravished with love, and filled with ecstasies of joy and ineffable<sup>2</sup> delight.

## 2) *Christ's Qualifications*

More particularly, there are the most amiable qualifications in Christ's person to attract and draw forth your love. I shall instance in these six: a) His greatness and authority, b) His holiness and purity, c) His wisdom and omniscience, d) His truth and fidelity, e) His fullness and all-sufficiency, f) His kindness and mercy.

### a) *Christ's greatness and authority*

Consider Christ's greatness and authority. *Aquila non capit muscas*: "The eagle does not pursue after flies." Great souls are not affected, except it be with great things. There is none so great as Jesus Christ: He is most great in honor and dignity; He is most great in power and authority. Excellency of majesty greatly engages the love and commands the hearts, as well as the obedience, of subjects. And those princes that have the greatest power and authority are the darlings of the people—when they don't abuse their place by unrighteousness and cruelty, by usurpation and tyranny; if power be managed with clemency, and authority with kindness, towards those that are under command. So highly do princes advance themselves hereby in the esteem and love of their people, that they will be ready to spend their estates and venture their lives in their service.

Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth; He is clothed with the highest honor, arrayed with the most excellent majesty, decked with the largest power, and invested with the greatest authority. He is the King and Lord of Glory; He is exalted to higher dignity than the greatest potentate that ever lived upon the earth—yea, He is advanced above all thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, of the glorious angels that are in heaven. All power is given to Him in heaven and earth (Mat 28:18). He does what He will in heaven: the angels are at His beck,<sup>3</sup> execute His will, and go and come at His command. And He has power on earth: He is the Head of the Church, and Head over all unto the Church. He can restrain His enemies, conquer them, and bring them under His feet at His pleasure. And whatever severity He shows sometimes in executing His judgments

---

<sup>2</sup> **ineffable** – indescribable; too great for words.

<sup>3</sup> **at His beck** – under His absolute control.

and taking vengeance on the wicked, He never abuses His power by unrighteousness. He is most just towards the worst, and punishes them here less than their iniquities deserve. What kindness and clemency does He show to His own subjects and people!

And will not you have a great love to so great a person? Should not the consideration of the high dignity of your Lord raise your love of Him unto a great height? When Christ has such authority, shall He not command your hearts? When Christ is invested with such power that He can defend you against the rage and cruelty of your most powerful and malicious adversaries, will you not love greatly such a person, as well as trust confidently under the shadow of His government?

*b) Christ's holiness and purity*

Consider Christ's holiness and purity. Some great persons who abound in wealth and honor, ...have some kind of amiable natural qualities and acquired accomplishments that might render them very useful in their countries. Yet through their wickedness and debauchery, their filthiness and impurity, [and] their impious and vicious lives, they stain all their other excellencies, and render themselves the objects of contempt and scorn unto those who otherwise would bear great respect and love to them.

But Christ is most amiable for His holiness and purity. He was holy in His birth: although born of a sinful woman, yet he was born without sin. When He lived among impure sinners, He kept His garments from all stains and spots. His heart and life were free from all pollutions; and never was He guilty of the least transgression, either in action or the least inclination. Oh, what an excellent person was Christ when here upon the earth! How glorious in holiness! What bright beams of perfect purity and exact innocency did Christ scatter in those dark places of the earth where He lived, and amongst those dark sullied sinners with whom He did converse! How then does Christ shine in holiness, now [that] He is entered into the Holy of Holies that is above, and there converses with none but such as are holy!

I know, because of Christ's holiness and purity, He is the object of the hatred and enmity of the wicked and ungodly. Because Christ is an enemy unto their darling and beloved lusts, they have an enmity against Christ's person. When He was here below He told His brethren, "The world...hateth [me], because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (Joh 7:7), and the hatred of the world still abides upon the same account. Christ reproves the world of sin, and this the world cannot endure and [wants to do] away with. The beams of Christ's holiness offend their sore eyes; His holy precepts offend their carnal hearts.

Yet notwithstanding this, He is a most suitable object for the love of saints upon the account of His holiness. Such as are truly judicious will love them most who are best, and such as are really the best men and women in the world are most holy. If you are Christ's disciples indeed, you love holiness wherever you see it—and can you love the imperfect holiness that is in God's people, and will you not love Christ, Who is perfectly, infinitely holy Himself, and the spring of all the holiness that is to be found in any of the children of men? If there be such a wonderful luster in the derived holiness of some that it makes them to shine as lights in a dark world, what a wonderful transcendent luster is there in the original holiness that is in Christ!—which, as it is matter of great admiration, so it calls for great affection. “Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it” (Psa 119:140). Christ is the Word—not the written Word, but the essential Word—and He is very pure; therefore, you should love Him.

*c) Christ's wisdom and omniscience*

Consider Christ's wisdom and omniscience. Wisdom makes the face to shine; learning advances some very highly in esteem. Such as know most, if their morals be suitable to their intellectuals, are most admired by those that understand what true worth is. Especially if there be spiritual wisdom in conjunction with natural and acquired—if there be much grace in the heart as well as much knowledge in the head—how worthy are such to be beloved?

Daniel was a man of great learning and wisdom, skilled in all the learning of the Chaldeans that was not sinful and diabolical; and besides this, he was endued with divine wisdom by the teachings of the Holy Spirit. The angel told this Daniel more than once or twice that he was a man “greatly beloved.” He was greatly beloved by the Lord of heaven, greatly beloved by his prince on earth, and greatly beloved by his people and by all, except some few that envied his prosperity and favor. Daniel's wisdom rendered him so universally amiable: how then should Christ be beloved because of His wisdom and knowledge! The wisdom of Christ is far beyond the wisdom of Daniel or the wisdom of Solomon, who was wiser than Daniel. These men had wisdom that made them famous and esteemed in their day; but Christ is Wisdom, the wisdom of the Father (1Co 1:30). They were children of wisdom, but Christ is the father and fountain of wisdom. They had some jewels of wisdom, but the treasures of wisdom are hid and laid up in Christ (Col 2:3). They had learning and knowledge, but their knowledge was ignorance compared with the knowledge of Christ—the greatest part of the things that they knew being but the least part of the things that they knew not. They knew some things, but Christ is omniscient and knows all things. They knew many secrets of nature; but Christ knows the secrets of heaven, the mind of God, and nothing is hid from Him.



How greatly beloved, then, should Christ be! If you are wise you will—if you would be wise you must—love Christ, Who is so infinitely wise Himself, and Who alone can make you truly wise.

*d) Christ's truth and fidelity*

Consider Christ's truth and fidelity. Truth and faithfulness are very rare in our days, when falsehood and deceit so much abound. What was said of old, "Truth faileth; and...is fallen in the street" (Isa 59:14-15), the same may be said now. Therefore, such as are true without guile, faithful without deceit, are worthy of great esteem and love. But what love should you give unto Christ, Who is not only true, but Truth itself (Joh 14:6); Who is most faithful in all His undertakings and promises, and never deceived any that put their trust in Him; Who is often better than His word, never worse? You will love a true and faithful friend, and will you not love a true and faithful Christ, the best friend of the children of men? As Christ's faithfulness should encourage your confidence in Him, so it should endear your love unto Him.

*e) Christ's fullness and all-sufficiency*

Consider Christ's fullness and all-sufficiency. Such as have large and plentiful estates are greatly beloved by the poor and indigent, if they find them also to have large hearts and open hands ready to distribute unto their wants<sup>4</sup> and necessities. None have such fullness and plenty as the Lord Jesus Christ, and none so willing to communicate of his fullness unto the wants of such as are poor in spirit and sensible of their need, "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col 1:19). There is not only plenty in Him, but fullness: not the fullness of the cistern, but the fullness of the fountain; not the fullness only of sufficiency for Himself, but the fullness of redundancy<sup>5</sup> for His people; not some fullness for some things, but all fullness for all things that are good; not fullness for some time and to continue but for a while, but *all* fullness dwells in Him and abides for all His people throughout all generations. And this not to depend upon the pleasure of men, whose minds may alter, but it has pleased the Father—it depends upon the pleasure of the Father, Who is always the same, and Whose good will to His people is unchangeable.

There is a twofold fullness in Christ for His people here, besides His fullness of glory (Isa 6:3), which has a reference to eternity. There is a fullness of merit, and a fullness of Spirit. 1) [There is in Christ] a fullness of merit in that full and perfect righteousness which He has wrought out for them, and which He imputes unto them for their justification. 2) There is a fullness of Spirit in Christ, the

---

<sup>4</sup> **wants** – needs.

<sup>5</sup> **redundancy** – overflowing; more than enough.

Spirit being given unto Him without measure (Joh 3:34), which He imparts and communicates unto them for their sanctification and consolation. Christians, you are empty, [but] Christ is full; you are poor, Christ is rich; you are indigent, Christ is all-sufficient—and will not you love Christ, Who is able to do for you beyond what you are able to ask or think (Eph 3:20), and is as willing as He is able to supply all your spiritual necessities? Will you not love Christ, Who is an overflowing and ever-flowing fountain of good, Who has inexhaustible treasures of graces and comforts in Him, which are set open before you and unto you, and every day you may freely come and fetch such jewels out of this treasury as are of higher worth and greater use than any earthly riches, in the greatest plenty and abundance?

*f) Christ's kindness and mercy*

Consider Christ's kindness and mercy. All the kindness of men is unkindness compared with the kindness of Christ; all the mercies of men are cruelty compared with the mercies of Christ. He is all kindness, all bowels,<sup>6</sup> all compassion, all pity, all grace, all mercy to miserable lost mankind. (I shall not enlarge here because this will fall under [Use 4 in] the second head of [Motives], taken from the consideration of Christ's love.) And if you add the kindness and mercy of Christ to all His other excellencies and perfections, surely He will appear to have incomparably the greatest attractives in Him for love, unto any that have not a very thick veil of unbelief before their eyes to hide Him from their view.

## **B. What Christ Is to the Father**

Secondly, consider what Christ is to the Father: 1) He is most nearly related to Him; 2) He is most dearly beloved by Him.

### ***1) Christ Most Nearly Related to the Father***

Christ is most nearly related and also most perfectly like unto the Father. All the creatures are related to God as their Maker, but God's children are more nearly related. The saints are nearly related to God, who are His children by adoption and regeneration; the angels are more nearly related to God, who are His sons by creation and never were separated from Him by sin; but the Lord Jesus Christ is most nearly related unto God, Who is His Son by eternal generation.<sup>7</sup> Thus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and bears His image most perfectly, being the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person (Heb 1:3).

---

<sup>6</sup> **bowels** – used as the seat of empathetic emotion.

<sup>7</sup> **eternal generation** – The communication of the same numerical essence, whole and entire, from the Father to the Son. (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*; 1.460)

This near relation of Christ and His likeness to the Father calls for your strongest love. If you have reason to honor the Father, on the same account you have reason to honor the Son; if you have reason to love the Father, you have the same reason to love the Son. You will love the sons of princes, and will you not love the Son of God? You will love your own children, who bear your own image, and will not you love Christ, Who is the express image of God? We read of Christ, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phi 2:6). Christ (without robbery or derogation<sup>8</sup> unto God) is equal with God in all glorious excellencies and perfections; and therefore your highest and strongest love is His due, and without robbery you cannot withhold it from Him.

## ***2) Christ Most Dearly Beloved by the Father***

Christ is most dearly beloved by the Father (2Pe 1:17); for He received honour and glory from God the Father when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mat 3:17). He, then, that is worthy of the Father's love, surely is worthy of yours. He that is chiefly beloved by the Father should chiefly be beloved by you.

## **C. What Christ Is to All True Christians**

Thirdly, consider what Christ is unto all true Christians. If you be such, Christ is your Shepherd. He feeds you in green pastures; He has laid down His life for His sheep—and will you not love such a shepherd?

He is your Captain, Who has conquered all your enemies for you and leads you on to take the spoils—and will you not love such a leader?

He is your Prophet, Who teaches you the most excellent things that ever were taught: the highest mysteries, the most glorious truths, which are of the greatest concernment to know and believe. He teaches you in the most excellent way by His Word and Spirit, opening your understandings as well as His truths, giving you light and an eye to discern this light—and will you not love such a teacher?

He is your High Priest, Who has made satisfaction for you, and withal makes intercession for you to reconcile you unto God; and His intercession is incessant and prevalent—and will you not love such an advocate?

He is your King, Who rules you most powerfully and righteously, most wisely and graciously—and will you not love such a sovereign?

He is your Benefactor, the most kind and bountiful, and no gifts are comparable unto His gifts—and will you not love such a friend?

---

<sup>8</sup> **derogation** – taking away from, making something less than it was before.

He is your Brother; and if He be not ashamed to own you for His brethren and sisters, will it not be a shame if you should withhold from Him your hearts?

He is your Husband; and you are joined to Him by the Spirit and faith, in such bonds as cannot be broken—and will not you embrace Him in the arms of your dearest love?

He is your Redeemer, Who rescued and delivered you from sin and Satan, from death and wrath. He has redeemed you by price, the price of His blood, and has He not then given the greatest price for your love? He has redeemed you also by conquest, and shall He not make a conquest of your hearts?

Surely you are altogether unworthy of these relations if you do not present Christ with your most endeared and choicest affections. Thus for the motives drawn from the consideration of what Christ is in Himself.

## 13. CHRIST'S LOVE TO TRUE CHRISTIANS

The second sort of motives to excite your love to Christ may be drawn from the consideration of Christ's love to true Christians. If you are Christians indeed, Christ loves you

- A. With the freest love,
- B. With the truest love,
- C. With the strongest love,
- D. With the surest love.

### A. The Freest Love

Consider that Christ loves you with the freest love. There are many motives and attractives for your love to Christ, but Christ's love to you is most free: nothing in yourselves [provides] motives to draw and engage His love—except deformity and enmity to Him, except filthiness that He loathes, and wickedness that His soul hates.

There is no man in the world that loves you, but he finds or fancies<sup>1</sup> some loveliness in you, something to be a motive to draw his love to you. Wit is a motive to some, wealth to others; beauty to some, strength to others; near relation to some, dear love to others; liberality to some, service to others; greatness to some, goodness to others. Likeness, whether it be in good or evil, is a motive to the love of the most.

But Christ's first love to you is altogether free. That which is a motive to men and induces their love to you is no motive to incline the love of Christ. The sin that you brought into the world with you and the many sins that since you came into the world have been committed by you are enough to shut out all motives of love in Christ, unto Whom all sin is so odious and abominable.

Whatever motive induced Christ to love you, it was not drawn from yourselves, but it was drawn from His own bowels. And will not this free love of Christ incline you to love Him? Does He love you most freely, and will not you love Him most dearly? Did Christ love you without any motive to draw His love; and will not you love Christ, in Whom there are so many motives to draw your love? Did Christ begin to love, and will not you make a return? Did Christ love you under your deformity; and will not you love Him in Whom there is such perfect beauty? If you

---

<sup>1</sup> **fancies** – imagines.

now have any spiritual beauty, it is through the comeliness that Christ has put upon you. But Christ's first love was free, which is matter of the greatest admiration, and should be a motive unto the greatest affection.

## **B. The Truest Love**

Consider that Christ loves you with the truest love. There is little true love in the world. You have many that truly hate you, few that truly love you, and there is much dissimulation in the pretended love and affection of some. All that flatter you do not truly love you. Love in show and outward appearance, in good words and fair speeches, is common; but love in deed and in truth, that evidences itself in real offices of love where there is the greatest need—this is rarely to be found.

Job complained, "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place" (Job 6:15-17). In the prosperity of Job, he had many friends; and their love and friendship seemed to have some strength and consistency, like the ice upon the brook. But when heat of trouble and calamity came upon Job, then the love of his friends melted and vanished away, like ice and snow before the warm beams of the sun. The love of the most is selfish, for their own ends; and, therefore, when their love is not like to be beneficial, but rather create trouble and prejudice to themselves, it comes to nothing.

True Christianity teaches another kind of love. Those who are powerfully religious have a true love that is ready to show itself most in adverse situations. But none do or can love you with such a true love as Jesus Christ: there is no flattery or dissimulation in His love. His love is not in the least counterfeit; it is not in the least selfish and for His own ends. He does not love you to receive good from you, but that He might do good unto you! He loves you not only in prosperity, but chiefly He evidences His love in affliction and adversity. He is a present help in the time of trouble, and then gives the most tender demonstrations of His love. He is touched with the feeling of your infirmities when you are tempted, and sympathizes with you in your sorrows when you are afflicted. He shows His love in visiting you under your troubles, in supporting you, in relieving you, and in delivering you. Oh, what love should you have unto the Lord Jesus Christ, Who loves you with such a true love!

## **C. The Strongest Love**

Consider that Christ loves you with the strongest love. His love is stronger than death, more ardent than the fire, which has a most vehement flame. The

strength of Christ's love to you shows itself in the activity of His love, in His doing for you; and this will appear in three things: 1) in what He has done for you, 2) in what He is doing for you, [and] 3) in what He will do for you.

### ***1) What Christ Has Done for You***

The strength and activity of Christ's love to you shows itself in what Christ has done for you. I shall briefly name some particulars.

*a. It was the strong love of Christ that brought Him down from heaven for you, to assume your nature.* What manner of love was this that God should become man, that Spirit should become flesh, that He Who made the world should be born of a mean virgin; and all for your sakes!

*b. It was the love of Christ that made Him to fulfil all righteousness for you.* He yielded perfect obedience to the Law, both moral and ceremonial,<sup>2</sup> that you might have the benefit of it.

*c. It was the love of Christ that made Him submit Himself to the temptations of the devil for you,* that He, suffering being tempted, might be able to succor you when you are tempted.

*d. It was the love of Christ that made Him endure the contradictions of sinners for you.* He bore many affronts, contumelies,<sup>3</sup> envyings, and blasphemies of wicked men, that He might give you an example how to carry yourselves under the like circumstances.

*e. It was the love of Christ that made Him lay down His life for you.* "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends" (Joh 15:13-14). That such a person as Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should undergo death, and such a death as that of the cross, so disgraceful, so painful; that He should submit to such ignominy<sup>4</sup> and endure such agony, such tearings in His flesh, such pressures in His spirit, and that with such resolution and willingness, with such submission and patience—and that for such as you, although now His friends, yet while in a state of nature strangers and enemies—here was love stronger than death! Oh, the height! Oh, the depth of this love! There are such dimensions in this love of Christ as the longest line of your most extended thoughts and imaginations can never be able to reach and measure.

---

<sup>2</sup> **moral and ceremonial** – moral reflects the aspect of God's Law reflecting His abiding design for all men's behavior; ceremonial reflects the aspect of God's Law for Israel prefiguring and preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> **contumelies** – insulting, contemptuous language or treatment.

<sup>4</sup> **ignominy** – public disgrace; shame.

*f. It was the love of Christ that raised Him again from the dead for you:* “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom 4:25).

*g. It was the love of Christ that carried Him up from earth to heaven, where He was before, for you.* “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (Joh 16:7).

## **2) What Christ Is Doing for You**

The strength and activity of Christ's love to you shows itself in what He is doing for you.

*a. He is interceding for you at the right hand of God:* “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” (Rom 8:34). It is through love that Christ pleads for you in heaven, that your persons may be accepted, your sins pardoned, your prayers answered, and that the Holy Ghost may be sent down to you to teach, sanctify, and comfort you.

*b. He is preparing a place for you:* “In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (Joh 14:2). It is through love that Christ, as your forerunner, is for you entered into the glorious palace that is above, to take possession of it for you and to prepare places there for your reception.

## **3) What Christ Will Do for You**

The strength and activity of Christ's love to you shows itself in what He will do for you.

*a. He will keep you in His hand,* that none shall pluck you thence: “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (Joh 10:28). Because you are received into the arms of His love, therefore you shall be kept by the hand of His power, and therefore you shall never either finally or totally fall away.

*b. Christ will make all things work together for your good:* “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom 8:28). Christ has an endeared love to all you that love God, your love being the fruit of His. And when men and devils conspire together to do you mischief, Christ's love will turn it unto your spiritual advantage.

*c. Christ will stand by you in trouble and at death:* “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you” (Joh 14:18). When affliction arises, especially if it be for His sake and you are bereaved of all outward comforts, Christ will not leave you comfortless. When friends fail, flesh fails, heart fails, yea, and life fails, Christ



will not fail, but will stand by and strengthen you, and be a light to you in your darkest hours—a stay to your spirits when they are ready to sink within you.

*d. After death, Christ will take care of your souls.* He will not suffer them to wander they know not where. He will not suffer the devil to seize on them as his prey; but He will send His angels to conduct and convey them into the heavenly paradise—that where He is, there they may be also (Joh 14:3). “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” (Luk 16:22). “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2Co 5:8).

*e. Christ will raise up your bodies at the Last Day.* If your bodies should be consumed by fire, or drowned in the water, or rot in the earth—whatever becomes of them—the Lord Jesus at His second glorious appearance will find them and raise them, and transform them into the likeness of His most glorious body. “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Joh 6:40). “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phi 3:20-21).

*f. Christ will send forth His angels to gather you* into the society of the elect, which have lived in all ages and all parts of the world, and to convey you into His presence to meet Him in the air when He comes to judge the world. “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Mat 24:31). “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” (1Th 4:16-17).

*g. Christ will own you, crown you, and admit you into the kingdom of heaven,* which He has prepared for you: “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat 25:34).

Here is strong and active love indeed! And shall not the consideration of this love of Christ raise and heighten your love unto Him? Shall it not provoke and excite you unto activity of love, unto the lively and most vigorous exercise thereof? Has Christ united Himself to your nature, and shall not your hearts be united to His person? Has He fulfilled all righteousness for you, and will not you fulfill His command of love? Has He endured such temptations, contradictions, and sufferings upon your account, and given Himself to die for you; and will not you give your hearts unto Him? Has He risen from the dead and ascended into heaven for

you, and will not your affections arise from the earth and ascend into heaven, where Jesus Christ is? Does He plead in heaven with the Father for you, and will not you hearken to His pleadings—by His Word and Spirit—with you for your love?

Is He preparing a glorious mansion for you in His Father's house, and will not you prepare a place for Him and entertain Him in the inner room of your chiefest affections? Does and will He keep you in His hand, and will not you embrace Him in your bosoms? Will He make all things work together for your good, and will not your affections work towards Him? Will He stand by you in trouble and at death, and will not this put life into your love? Will He send His angels to convey your souls into His presence when separated from your bodies, and shall not your hearts get to Him and lodge with Him before? Will He raise up your bodies at the Last Day, and will not the hopes of this raise up your affections? Shall you be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and will Christ there own and crown you; and will not the believing fore-thoughts of this ravish your hearts with love to Christ, and transport you with unspeakable joy?

The strength of Christ's love to you, I think, should engage your love for Him, not only in the truth of it, but also in the strength of it.

#### **D. The Surest Love**

Consider that Christ loves you with the surest love. Some friends may love you awhile with some kind of strength and ardency; but such differences may arise between you as shall soon weaken and cool their love, and of friends they shall prove strangers, yea, become enemies unto you. Or, if their love does abide, it is not sure, because *they* may not abide: if their love die not while they live, they may soon die and then their love is at an end.

But the love of the Lord Jesus Christ unto you is the most sure love: if He begins to love you, He will continue to love you. If He loves you once, He will love you to the end, or, rather, without end. The love of Christ is not subject to mutations and changes like unto ours. If you lag in your love, He will not fail in His love; and though you offend Him, He is not irreconcilable. He may indeed, upon unkindness on your side, withdraw the manifestations of His love for awhile, but He will never wholly remove His love from you. The love of Christ admits of no changing, knows no ending.

Christians, what motives can you find in any person or anything in the world that you have seen comparable to those that you have in this Lord Jesus Christ, though you have never seen Him. He is a person most amiable in Himself. His greatness, His holiness, His wisdom, His faithfulness, His fullness, [and] His kindness do make Him shine with an admirable luster. His relation to the Father,

and the love that the Father bears to Him; His relation unto you—being your Shepherd, your Captain, your Teacher, your Advocate, your Sovereign, your Benefactor, your Brother, your Husband, your Redeemer—all these do commend Him to your love. But when matchless beauty and loveliness do meet in a person that bears matchless love to you; when this most amiable Lord Jesus loves you with such a free love, such a cordial love, such a strong and active love, such a sure and constant love; when His love is incomparable, surpassing all other love, and incomprehensibly surpassing all knowledge—oh, with what activity, ardor, and constancy should you love so suitable an object!

## 14. CHRIST'S BENEFITS

The third sort of motives to excite your love unto Christ may be drawn from the consideration of Christ's benefits. If you are true Christians, you have 1) spiritual light from Christ; 2) spiritual life from Him; 3) the pardon of sin from Him; 4) the robes of righteousness from Him; 5) the peace of conscience from Him; 6) the joys of the Holy Ghost from Him; 7) The riches of grace from Him; 8) the dignity of children from Him, 9) the spirit of prayer from Him; 10) title to the kingdom of heaven, with the first-fruits and foretastes of it from Him here, and [you] shall be put into the possession of it by Him hereafter.

**1. You have spiritual light from Christ.** Christ is the Sun from Whom all the beams of this light do come. Time was when you were not only in the dark, but darkness; but Jesus Christ did enlighten you. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8). It is Christ that has turned you from darkness to light, that has translated you out of darkness into His marvelous light. He has caused a marvelous light to shine into your minds, whereby He has discovered to you the wonderful things of the Law, that thereby you might discern the odious nature of sin—and whereby He has discovered to you the wonderful mysteries of the gospel, that thereby you might discern the excellency of gospel privileges, and the exceeding riches of God's grace and kindness through Jesus Christ. Christ has opened your eyes to see the chiefest evil, that you might be delivered from it; and the chiefest good and happiness, that you might attain unto it.

And does not this light that you have from Christ call for your love? If the man that was born blind and was cured of his natural darkness by Christ, loved Christ for this favor so as boldly to plead for Him before the Pharisees—though he were for it cast out of the synagogues, as you may read in John 9—how much more reason have you to love Christ, Who has cured you of your spiritual darkness, [by] which, had it continued, you would have gone blindfolded to hell, where there is blackness of darkness forever?

**2. You have spiritual life from Christ.** You were spiritually dead, and Christ has quickened you: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). We read that Christ raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been buried four days (Joh 11). Lazarus did love Christ before; but no doubt this resurrection of him so wonderfully endeared his love to Christ exceedingly. And shall not Christ's raising you up from your spiritual death raise your hearts unto a

great height of love to Christ! You will greatly love one that is instrumental to save your natural life when in great hazard and danger, especially if he should do it by venturing his own; and will you not greatly love Christ, Who has given you spiritual life, which is far more excellent than the life of nature; and when He died that you might live?—and when, if you had not received this spiritual life from Him, you could not have escaped eternal death?

**3. You have the pardon of sin from Christ,** [which He] has purchased for you—and the purchase has cost Him dear, even His blood that was of more worth than the treasures, were there so many, of ten thousand worlds. This Christ has sued out<sup>1</sup> for you by His intercession at the right hand of God. While you were under the guilt of sin, you were bound over by the justice of God to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; but, being pardoned, your obligation to future punishment is taken off, and you are no more liable to the wrath to come, and the vengeance of hell, than if you had never sinned. And will you not love the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has procured for you so great a privilege? We read of one that had much forgiven her, and she loved much (Luk 7:47). And have not you had much forgiven? Have not your sins been very numerous and very heinous, and has Christ obtained the pardon of them all? And will not you love Christ much?

**4. You have the robes of righteousness from Christ.** You are born naked of original righteousness, and you could not work out for yourselves any actual righteousness that might cover your nakedness. Whatever you wrought yourselves, it was rags that could not cover you; and it was filthy rags, which polluted and defiled you (Isa 64:6). Christ has given you the robes of His perfect righteousness to cover and adorn you with, and therein you are accepted as perfectly righteous in the sight of God. Oh, how should we love the Lord Jesus for this garment! If your bodies were naked and one should give you clothes to cover you, especially if they were rich clothes, you would love such a person; and will you not love the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given you a garment to cover your souls—and that a very rich one, even the robes of His most pure and unspotted righteousness, which by faith is put upon you?

**5. You have peace of conscience from Christ.** This is that peace which the Scripture tells us “passeth all understanding” (Phi 4:7)—it passes all understanding to know the worth of it. Such as have this peace would not leave it upon any account; they would part with estate, liberty, or life rather than part with their peace. And those that have it not, but now do slight and neglect it, if they be awakened by the sides of the grave and when they are come to the confines of

---

<sup>1</sup> **sued out** – made petition.

eternity, then they would value this peace and give all the world (were it at their disposal) for it.

This jewel of peace you have from Jesus Christ; He has purchased it for you. The chastisement of your peace was upon Him, and He has promised and bequeathed it in His last will and testament unto you: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (Joh 14:27). In His reconciling you unto God, He has laid a foundation for this peace in all you that are true believers. And moreover, if He has spoken peace to you in giving you well-grounded evidences of your reconciliation; if after raising a storm, He has sent a calm into your spirits, and given a sweet serenity unto you in the testimony of His Spirit to and with your spirits, that your peace is made with God—oh, how should this draw forth your love to Christ!

**6. You have the joys of the Holy Ghost from Christ.** We read of the Thessalonians that they "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (1Th 1:6). Such are those joys spoken of in the text, which are "unspeakable and full of glory" (1Pe 1:8). These are not carnal joys, but spiritual, which are of a higher nature and sweeter relish, that have a higher object, and are the beginnings of eternal joys.

If you have these joys in any measure, you have them from Christ. He sends the Holy Ghost from heaven to be your Comforter, to fill your hearts with spiritual joys. And shall not your hearts then be filled with love to the Lord Jesus, Who is the author of them?

**7. You have the riches of grace from Christ.** If any of you were poor and ready to starve with hunger and cold, and a rich man should give or send to you a chest full of gold and silver, or a cabinet full of jewels worth many thousand pounds,<sup>2</sup> would you not love such a benefactor? The Lord Jesus has given you the riches of grace, the least measure of which is really of more worth than the vastest treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones that ever were gathered together and heaped up by the most wealthy man that ever lived upon the face of the earth—and will you not love Jesus Christ, Who has given you these inestimable riches?

**8. You have the dignity of children from Christ.** "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1Jo 3:1)! This privilege of adoption is bestowed upon you not only by the Father, but also by the Son: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Joh 1:12). We read of some raised from the dust, and lifted up from the dunghill, to sit with princes

---

<sup>2</sup> **pounds** – standard British monetary unit.

(Psa 113:7-8). It is a far higher advancement to be lifted up from the dunghill of sin, slaves to lusts, and children of the devil, to be made the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. This honor have all the saints; and it is Jesus Christ Who has conferred this honor upon you—and will not this endear your love to Christ?

**9. You have the spirit of prayer from Christ.** Being sons, the Spirit of the Son is sent down into your hearts, whereby you are enabled to say “Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6). Through Christ you have access unto God by the Spirit (Eph 2:18). It is the Spirit of Christ that helps your infirmities in prayer, that forms your petitions, that enables you to pray with faith, life, and fervor. Through Christ you have free admittance to the throne of grace; through Christ you have assistance by His Spirit to pray in prayer; through Christ you have audience and gracious returns. Oh, how are you beholden unto Christ! And how should you love Him!

**10. You have a title to the Kingdom of heaven from Christ.** Through Christ you are children, and through Christ you are heirs. It is Christ that gives the first-fruits of the heavenly Canaan, the earnest<sup>3</sup> of the future treasure and inheritance that He has promised, and the foretastes sometimes of those soul-ravishing pleasures that the saints shall have in fullness and to eternity, when they are received up into glory. And it is Christ that hereafter will give possession unto you of the Kingdom of heaven. At the day of His glorious appearance—after He has owned you before the whole world of angels and men, and honored you to be His assessors in His judging and condemning the wicked—He will receive you with acclamations of joy and triumph into the glorious palace of the New Jerusalem, where you shall have the beatific vision and fruition of the glorious Jehovah, and be made partakers of such glorious felicity as has not now entered into your hearts to conceive.

And will not the consideration of all this set your hearts on fire with love to Christ? Christians, is there any person like to Christ's person? Is there any love like to Christ's love? Are there any benefits like to Christ's benefits? No, no; He is incomparable in all. I think, then, you should by this time feel your love to Christ like fire, to burn within with a vehement flame. Or I think your love to Christ should be like water, I mean the waters of the sanctuary spoken of (Eze 47:3-5), which at entrance were but to the ankles, a little further were up to the loins, a little further a deep river over the head, where a man might swim. I think you should perceive an increasing of your love under these various motives. If your love were more shallow at first, I think by this time it should have got some depth; when such winds do blow, the waters should flow and overflow. I think

---

<sup>3</sup> **earnest** – pledge of anything afterwards to be received in greater abundance; here referring to the blessings of spiritual communion with Christ in this life as a sign of eternal blessings to follow.

your love to Christ should be raised unto a high tide and run with a strong stream.

Thus for the motives drawn from the consideration of Christ's benefits, all which are so many advocates for your love.



## 15. THE LOVE TRUE CHRISTIANS HAVE TO CHRIST

The fourth and last sort of motives to excite your love to Christ may be drawn from the consideration of that love which Christians have, or should have, unto Him. Here consider: A) the duty; B) the privilege; C) the honor; D) The wisdom; E) The excellency; F) The necessity; G) The usefulness; H) The delightfulness; I) The attainableness—of this love to Jesus Christ.

### A. Your Duty to Love Christ

Consider it is your duty to love Christ. If it be your duty to have a natural affection unto parents and children, it is much more your duty to have spiritual affections unto Christ. If it be your duty to have conjugal<sup>1</sup> affection unto your earthly husband and wife, it is a greater duty to have conjugal love unto this, your heavenly Husband. If it be your duty to love brethren, sisters, and kindred that love you, it is a greater duty to love Jesus Christ, Who loves you above all relations. If it be your duty to love your enemies, it is much more your duty to love Christ, Who is your best friend. It is the will of your heavenly Father that you should love Christ. The devil would have you hate Him, but God would have you love Him—and whether it be most reason that you should obey the will of God or the will of the devil, judge ye. It is the will of Christ that you should love Him; the will of the flesh is against this love. Whose will ought you to comply with?

You are not debtors to the flesh that you should obey its command, neither are you debtors to any creatures to give them your choicest affections—but you are debtors unto Christ to give Him your chief love. Christ has most right to your love, and will you not give to Christ His due? If you are bound to give men their due, are you not much more bound to give unto Christ His due? Christ's due is your best, and have you anything better than your hearts to present Him with? Will Christ accept of anything at your hands, should you withhold from Him your hearts? Had you thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil to offer to Him; had you all the treasures of the earth at your disposal, and should lay it down all at His feet—it would be all slighted and disregarded by Him, if you give away your hearts from Him.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> **conjugal** – marital.

<sup>2</sup> **give...Him** – in the sense of insulting Christ by giving them to another.

## B. Your Privilege to Love Christ

Consider it is your privilege that you may love Christ, that Christ will give you leave to do it and kindly accept of your love. Should beggars fall in love with princes in order to the marriage union, both their persons and love would be rejected with scorn, anger, and disdain. There is a far greater distance between you and Jesus Christ than there is between the highest prince and the meanest beggar; and yet the Lord Jesus Christ gives you leave to love Him with a spiritually conjugal love, in order to the nearest spiritual union<sup>3</sup> and conjunction. Notwithstanding His greatness and your meanness, He is not ashamed to give entertainment unto your love. Although you are so mean as creatures and have been so vile as sinners, yet He does not scorn and disdain you, but both [your] persons and love may find ready acceptance with Him. It is your duty to love Christ because He commands you, and it is your privilege that you may love Christ because He allows you to do it.

## C. Your Honor to Love Christ

Consider it is your honor to love Christ. The real honor of any is not the noble blood that runs in their veins, the high lineage from whence they are descended, the great titles with which they are invested, or the most eminent earthly dignities unto which they are advanced. The heathen could say, *Et Genus et Proavos, et quae non fecimus ipsi vix ea nostra voco*: “Our stock and noble ancestors, and what we have not done or deserved ourselves, we can hardly call our own.” And, *Virtus sola and unica nobilitas*: “Virtue is the only true nobility.” The Scripture tells us that “the vilest men are exalted” (Psa 12:8), and that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Dan 4:17). Princes and nobles, by their vices and wickednesses, may render themselves more vile than the earth under their feet, more base than the mire in the streets.

The Word of God accounts only them to be truly honorable that are truly gracious, and this grace of love to Jesus Christ puts a great honor and luster upon all those that have it. There is no greater and higher object for your love than the Lord Jesus Christ, a person of so great eminency and excellency. The love of Christ ennobles the heart, and none in the world have such truly great and generous souls as those who have the greatest love to Him. According to the spirit, so is the man either base or honorable; and according to the chief love, so is the spir-

---

<sup>3</sup> See *Spiritual Union and Communion* by A. W. Pink (1886-1952); available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

it. If your heart chiefly loves any inferior things, as all sublunary<sup>4</sup> things are, hereby you are debased and dishonored; if your heart chiefly loves Christ, Who is a superior good and superlatively amiable, hereby you are dignified and become truly honorable.

We read of hope (that is, the grace of hope) that it “maketh not ashamed” (Rom 5:5), and the same may be said of this grace of love to Jesus Christ: it makes one not ashamed. Most in the world love those things that one time or other will make them ashamed: the covetous will be ashamed of their love of riches, the voluptuous<sup>5</sup> will be ashamed of their love of pleasures, and the ambitious will be ashamed of their love of honors. Disappointment of happiness and true contentment will make all ashamed of their inordinate creature-love,<sup>6</sup> especially when they come to reap the bitter fruit of their sin in their everlasting punishment. “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death” (Rom 6:21). But the love of Christ “maketh not ashamed”: it is no matter of dishonor, and therefore neither is nor will be matter of shame, for any to love Jesus Christ with the greatest strength and ardency. If the wicked despise and scorn God’s people upon the account of this love, their scorns are their real glory, as, on the contrary, their esteem of any upon the account of sin is a real shame and dishonor.

#### **D. Your Wisdom to Love Christ**

Consider it is your wisdom to love Christ. “Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deu 4:6). None have such wisdom and understanding as those who have and keep this statute and commandment to love the Lord Jesus Christ. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments” (Psa 111:10). The fear of the Lord and the love of Christ are always in conjunction, or rather, the former includes the latter. This is the beginning and chief part of wisdom, and those have the greatest understandings who have the strongest affections to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of Christ is the most reasonable and therefore the most wise love. That love is most reasonable which is chiefly carried forth towards that object which is most suitable and really most amiable. None is so suitable and amiable an object as the Lord Jesus Christ—as appears in what has been said already con-

---

<sup>4</sup> **sublunary** – beneath the moon; earthly.

<sup>5</sup> **voluptuous** – sensuous; suggestive of unrestrained pleasure of the senses.

<sup>6</sup> **creature-love** – love of created things (which have been created by God).

cerning Christ's person, Christ's love, and Christ's benefits. Such as love other persons or things with a chief love, they are mistaken in the objects of their love; they apprehend more excellency and desirableness in them than really is in them, and so their love is a foolish love and unreasonable—there being nothing really worthy of it, nothing really amiable in the chief place beneath and besides Christ. Such as make choice of Christ for the object of their chief love, they make the wisest choice. There really are those excellencies in Him that they apprehend, and beyond what they can possibly apprehend and conceive.

They are fools that are slow of heart to love Christ, and they are most wise that are most forward unto this love. It is your wisdom to love Christ chiefly and to love Christ ardently—such wisdom as will make your faces shine in the eyes of good men, and which will put a luster upon your spirits in the eyes of God! True wisdom does not consist in the invention of curious and quaint notions, in the framing of sound and rational deductions, in uttering the sense of the mind in neat and florid expressions. But the chief wisdom lies in the right placing of the affections, and none have attained so high a pitch of true spiritual wisdom as those that have attained the highest pitch of love to Jesus Christ.

It is matter of great wonder—when there is the greatest reason and the strongest arguments for the love of Christ—that men of the greatest parts<sup>7</sup> and learning who have heard of Christ, do not readily fall in love with Him, and attain higher degrees of this love than others of a more inferior capacity. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mat 11:25). Such of you as are but babes in worldly wisdom and human learning, as have but mean natural parts and no improvement by education, yet if you love the Lord Jesus Christ above all persons and things in the world, you are far wiser than the greatest scholars that are without this love.

## **E. The Excellency of Love to Christ**

Consider the excellency of this love unto Jesus Christ. As the knowledge of Christ is the most excellent knowledge—“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ” (Phi 3:8)—so the love of Christ is the most excellent love. It is a love of the most excellent object: the Lord Jesus, Who is so excellent. It is a love of the most excellent origin: it comes down from heaven, it is wrought by the Spirit of God.

It is a love that renders them most excellent that have it. The wicked that are without this love are like dross; the righteous that have it are like gold. The wick-

---

<sup>7</sup> **parts** – abilities; personal attributes, natural or acquired.

ed that hate Christ are like dirt; the righteous that love Him are like jewels. Other loves darken and defile; the love of Christ brightens the spirit and renders men truly illustrious and the excellent of the earth.

## **F. The Necessity of Love to Christ**

Consider the necessity of this love unto Jesus Christ.

1. *The love of Christ is universally necessary.* Some of you have need to do this thing, and others of you have need to do that; but all of you have the greatest need to love Christ. Some of you have need of this friend, and to love him that you may keep him, and others of you have need of another friend. One friend cannot serve the necessities of all. But all of you have need of Christ for your friend. He is the only friend that can serve all your necessities; and you have need to love Him above all friends. It is necessary that you who are poor should love Christ, who have but few or no friends; and it is necessary that you who are rich should love Christ, who have many friends—Christ being a friend instead of all to them that have none, and better than all to them that have the most.

2. *The love of Christ is absolutely and indispensably necessary.* It is not necessary that you should climb up into a high seat of dignity and honor, but it is absolutely necessary that your affections should climb up and ascend to Jesus Christ, Who is above. It is not necessary that you should abound in wealth, that you should have full bags, full coffers, and much riches in your houses; but it is absolutely necessary that you should have the riches of this grace of love to Jesus Christ in your hearts. Food is not so necessary to satisfy your hunger; clothes are not so necessary to cover your nakedness; houses are not so necessary to shelter you from the injury of the weather; the most needful thing is not so necessary to your bodies—as this love to Jesus Christ is necessary to your souls.

You may be poor and in the lowest condition here on earth, and yet be truly happy while you live and eternally happy in the other world, if you have this love to Jesus Christ. But without this love—whatever your riches, honors, and friends; your earthly delights and enjoyments be they never so desirable, never so plentiful—yet you are miserable and shall be miserable. You may love other persons and things in the world subordinately, but you must love Jesus Christ chiefly; otherwise, you are under the curse both of the Law and gospel, and you cannot escape the vengeance of hell.

## **G. The Usefulness of Love to Christ**

Consider the usefulness of this love unto Jesus Christ.

1. *The love of Christ is useful in prosperity* to ballast the heart, that it be not overset with the full gales of a flourishing condition. It is of use to moderate the affections to lawful things, and it is of use to keep the heart from unlawful and sinful loves. If Christ have not your hearts, some base and foolish lusts will have them, which will wound your consciences with guilt and pierce your hearts through with many sorrows.

2. *The love of Christ is useful in adversity*, to bear up the heart from sinking and being overwhelmed with the winds and waves of trouble and affliction. It is of use to establish the heart from being extraordinarily moved in the most stormy times. Not only faith, but love too, is of a fixing nature to keep from amazing fears of evil tidings and the greatest perils—and of a strengthening nature to stay and support the spirit, and keep off pressing griefs and despondencies in the darkest and most doleful days.

3. *The love of Christ is useful to quicken and excite unto duty*. This makes the yoke of Christ easy (Mat 11:29-30) and will enable you to draw cheerfully therein. This makes the burden of duty (so accounted by the most) to be no burden in esteem. If you have much love unto Christ, you will account duty to be your privilege and the service of Christ to be freedom—and none of His commands will be grievous, but all of them joyous unto you. If you have much love unto Christ, your hearts will be enflamed hereby with zeal for your Master's glory. You will never think you can do too much for Him.

4. *The love of Christ is useful to arm you against temptations*. If faith be a shield, love to Christ is a breastplate against the sharpest darts that the devil can throw at you. Love to Christ garrisons your hearts against this enemy, and is a strong defense against any overtures that the devil may make in his temptations to draw you to sin. "How can I do this evil and offend my dear Lord," will be the answer of love to repel temptations to sin, whatever alluring proffers they be accompanied with (Gen 39:9). Temptations will have no force to prevail over you if this love of Christ be strong within you.

5. *The love of Christ is useful to fit you for the cross* and the greatest sufferings that you may be called unto for the sake of Christ. If you have great love to Christ, you will be ready to suffer for Christ with patience and with cheerfulness. The heaviest cross will seem light; disgrace and shame will be accounted honor; losses will be esteemed gains; pains, pleasures or at least privileges; prisons will seem palaces; and death will be accounted life. Oh, how have some run to the stake and embraced the flames of fire kindled to burn them, when they have felt the fire of love to Christ burning strongly within them! Thus this love is useful in life.

6. *The love of Christ is useful at death.* This love in its strength will put a beauty upon the aspect of death, which seems so grim and terrible unto the most. If you have much love to Christ, you will look upon death as Christ's messenger sent for you to bring you out of the dark prison of the world and the body, and to convey you into the mansions of glory where your dear Lord is. You will not be unwilling to leave the world that you may live with Christ.

## **H. The sweetness of Love to Christ**

Consider the sweetness of this love unto Christ. If there be sweetness in the love of the members, there is much more sweetness in the love of the Head. If there be delight and comfort in the love of Christ's disciples for their Master's sake, there is much more delight and comfort in the love of Christ Himself, the Master, for His own sake. The apostle tells us of comfort in love that is in the love one of another (Phi 2:1), but the consolations in the love of Christ are far exceeding. There are no motions of heart as sweet as those of its strong and fervent outgoings in love to Christ, especially when Christ draws near and manifests His love unto the soul. Christ rejoices in His love unto His disciples, and they may rejoice in their love to Him.

And this joy in the love of Christ is a full joy: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (Joh 15:11). In the former verse, Christ speaks of His love to them, and here of His joy in them. They were the objects of His joy as they were the objects of His love. According to the measure and strength of their love to Christ, so is the fullness of their joy in Christ. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck" (Song 4:9). These are the words of Christ, the Beloved, unto His spouse, the Church, expressing the ravishing delight that He found in her looks of faith or glances of love, and the chain of graces that she was adorned with. How then may your hearts be ravished with unspeakable delight in looking upon Christ's most amiable face, and in the fervent actings of your love unto Him? When a glance of His eye, a smile, a beam from His countenance enkindles a fire in the breast, and this fire of love to Christ does burn and flame, oh, how sweet is this flame—beyond what tongue is able to express!

## **I. The Attainableness of Love to Christ**

And lastly, consider the attainableness of this love to Christ. Brute [beasts] are not capable of this love to Christ, but you are capable. As your minds are capable of knowing Him, so your hearts are capable of loving Him. Others have attained

this love, who were as much without it and as much averse unto it as any of you may be. Here you are capable; hereafter, if you live and die without it, you will be utterly incapable. You have now the means of grace, and as of other graces, so of this grace of love to Christ, in the diligent use of the means you may attain thereunto.

Thus I have done with the motives to excite you unto the love of Christ.



*PART IV*

*DIRECTIONS FOR OUR LOVE*

## 16. HOW TO ATTAIN THIS LOVE WHEN YOU ARE WITHOUT IT

The second thing propounded in the prosecution of the use of exhortation was to give directions, and the directions will be of two sorts: A) How to attain this love to Christ, and B) Wherein to show this love to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding how to attain this love to Christ, I shall show you how to do this when you are wholly without it (chapter 16), and when you have it but in a low degree and weak measure (chapter 17).

We begin, then, with how you that are graceless, Christless, and wholly without this love to Christ, may attain this love to Christ. You may do this through: 1) Persuasion, 2) Conviction of sin, 3) Gaining an interest in Christ, and 4) Use of means.<sup>2</sup>

### **Direction 1: Persuasion**

If you would attain this love to Jesus Christ, Whom you have never seen, you must get a *thorough persuasion that there is such a person as Jesus Christ*, and that He is such a person indeed as the Scriptures have revealed Him to be. The reason why heathens and infidels are without love to Christ is because they have never heard of Him; and the reason why many nominal Christians, who have heard of Christ, are without love to Him is because they are not really persuaded that there is, or ever was, such a person as Jesus Christ in the world. If you would attain this love, you must give firm assent to this truth (which is the greatest of all, and the very pillar and foundation of the whole Christian religion): that Christ really is, and that the history of Him is no cunningly devised fable.

If you have reason to believe that there was such a person as Alexander the Great,<sup>3</sup> that there was such person as Julius Caesar,<sup>4</sup> both which lived before Christ's time, you have more reason to believe that there was and is such a person

---

<sup>1</sup> Exhortation regarding *motives* to acquire love for Christ was the first part of Use 4 (chapters 12-15). This chapter begins the second part of Use 4: exhortation regarding *directions* for acquiring love to Christ (chapters 16-17) and for showing love to Christ (chapter 18).

<sup>2</sup> The editors have expanded the author's one introductory paragraph into these three.

<sup>3</sup> **Alexander the Great** (356-323 B.C.) – Greek king of Macedon, a state in northern ancient Greece; before his death at age 33, he had conquered most of the known world.

<sup>4</sup> **Julius Caesar** (100-44 B.C.) – Roman general and statesman who played a critical role in the gradual transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire.

as Jesus Christ. You have only profane<sup>5</sup> history for the former, but you have sacred history for the latter. You have only the writings of men to testify the one, but you have the Word of God in the Holy Scripture to testify the other. You have as much reason to believe the history of the gospel as to believe any other history, and you have more reason to believe the history of the gospel than to believe any other history.

I shall suggest one reason among many that might be mentioned. The history of the gospel was written by unlearned fishermen, and it was believed by as learned men as any in the world, in and near the time of their writing. [This] belief some of them sealed with their blood, which they would never have done had they found any reason to suspect the truth of this history. Had there been any reason of suspicion, they might easily have found out in those times, when such a grand “fable” as this (had it been a fable) could not possibly have gained credit among wise and inquisitive men—especially when it would have been their greatest worldly interest, the preservation of their estates and lives, to have disbelieved and disowned it. If, beside the apostles, all the learned Fathers<sup>6</sup> (whose works are extant amongst us, who lived near the apostle’s times, and some of whom suffered martyrdom for Christ’s sake) did see reason to believe that there was such a person as Christ, surely *you* have reason to believe, and no solid reason to discredit, the report of Him in the history of the gospel.

And when you have attained a firm assent unto this, get a full persuasion that Jesus Christ is such a person as the Scriptures do record and testify Him to be. Be persuaded of His amiableness, His greatness, His holiness, His wisdom, His faithfulness, His fullness, His kindness, the relation He stands in to the Father [as] His only begotten and dearly beloved Son; the relation He stands in to His people, especially in His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King—as I have set Him forth in the motives to stir up love [chapters 12-15]. Acquaint yourselves with the history of His birth so wonderful, of His life so holy, of His works so powerful, of His doctrine so heavenly, of His sufferings so great, of His death so painful and yet so voluntary, of His resurrection, ascension, session, and intercession at the right hand of God so needful for us—as you have this history upon record in the New Testament. The assent to this in your minds will be a preparative for the attaining of true love to Jesus Christ in your hearts.

---

<sup>5</sup> **profane** – common; secular.

<sup>6</sup> **Church Fathers** – certain teachers during the first centuries after Christ’s death, held in high esteem for their leadership and personal sacrifice.

## **Direction 2: Conviction of Sin**

### ***a. You have sinned.***

If you would attain true love unto Jesus Christ, you must get *conviction of sin and a sense of your need of Christ*. The prevailing love and liking of sin is inconsistent with true love unto Jesus Christ: such as love Christ do hate sin, and such as love sin have an enmity against Christ. While your hearts go after your covetousness, or your voluptuousness, or are set upon any other wickedness, your hearts cannot be set upon Christ. Before you can love Christ, your hearts must be taken off from sin. Get therefore a conviction of sin as the greatest evil in the world. Be persuaded what an evil thing, and a bitter, it is to transgress God's Law and thereby to affront the highest Majesty, the great King of glory. Look into the Word and Law of God, and see what is there required and what is there forbidden.

And then look back upon your lives, or look into the register of your consciences, that you may find out what your sins of omission and commission have been. Take a view of your transgressions of the Law, and of your disobedience also unto the gospel. As you are guilty before God, so labor for a clear sight and deep sense of your guilt: how you are under the curse for your disobedience, how you are liable to ruin and eternal destruction for your sins. Look upon sin as the most mischievous thing in the world. If there be any evil in any temporal calamities that ever did befall any of the children of men; yea, if there be any evil in future miseries, in the extremity and eternity of hell's plagues and punishments—be persuaded that there is far more evil in sin, which is the cause of all.

### ***b. You are without hope.***

Think how miserable you are while under the guilt and reigning power of sin, that the worm is not so vile, that the toad is not so full of deadly poison, that the filth of the earth is not comparable unto the filth of your sins. Think how base and disingenuous<sup>7</sup> you have been, how monstrously ungrateful to your Maker and Benefactor, what traitors and rebels you have been to your supreme King and Sovereign. Think what peril and danger continually you are in of death and hell, how weak the thread of life is that ties soul and body together—which may be suddenly cut when you are least aware, when you are most secure. And then, if you be found in a Christless state, your souls will be conveyed immediately unto a place of remediless and eternal misery.

Be persuaded that you are undone irrecoverably, unless the Lord Jesus Christ helps you, that you are lost forever unless the Lord Jesus Christ saves you, that you cannot escape the dreadful vengeance of God, but must be tormented most

---

<sup>7</sup> **disingenuous** – insincere; dishonest.

horribly and everlastingly among the devils and the damned in hell—unless the Lord Jesus Christ delivers you from the wrath that is to come.

**c. *You need a Savior.***

The sight and sense of sin, your miserable condition thereby, and of your indispensable need of Christ, will make way for your love of Him. If any of you were in debt many thousand pounds unto a severe creditor, and had not one penny to discharge it, and you were threatened by him to be thrown into prison, where you must lie, rot, starve, and die without hopes of relief or release except you could make payment of the debt; and if you should hear of such a rich man that were willing and did proffer to be your surety<sup>8</sup> and to pay all for you—surely you would have an endeared love to such a friend and benefactor. Your sins are debts beyond the vastest sum of money that ever was owed or paid, and you are not able to pay one farthing<sup>9</sup> to give the least satisfaction unto God, unto Whom you are indebted. And God is severe and strictly just. Without full satisfaction to His justice, He will throw you into a worse prison than the most nasty dolesome<sup>10</sup> prison on earth—I mean into the prison of hell, where you must lie without the least relief or any hopes of release. The Lord Jesus Christ proffers to be your Surety, to pay off all for you, and to give you a full discharge! Were you sensible what a debt sin is, and what a prison hell is, surely it would work your hearts unto an endeared love of such a Friend and Surety, Who alone can keep you out of this dolesome, dreadful prison—into which, without Him, you will certainly and may suddenly be thrown.

If any of you were sick of a death-threatening distemper; and you had made use of many physicians, but none could do you good; and if you should hear of one physician who could assuredly and would readily and freely cure your disease and save your life—surely you would thankfully make use of this physician, and his kindness would exceedingly engage your love. Sin is the soul's sickness; you are sick unto death. Sin, when it is finished, will bring forth death, not only temporal but eternal (Jam 1:15). It is the Lord Jesus Christ only that can cure you of this deadly sickness, that can remove your sin and thereby deliver you from this death of deaths. Get a sense of the dangerous sickness of sin, and you will prize, use, and love the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only physician of value in this case.

If any of you were guilty of murder, theft, high treason, or any other heinous breach of the law of the land, for which you were apprehended, arraigned, ac-

---

<sup>8</sup> **surety** – one who pledges to undertake the responsibilities or debt of another.

<sup>9</sup> **farthing** – coin formerly used in Great Britain worth one-fourth of a penny.

<sup>10</sup> **dolesome** – causing pain and suffering.

cused, and condemned to be hanged or burned, or to a more tormenting death than either; and if you should hear of a prince at court that had begged the pardon of such crimes, for such malefactors, and had obtained, and he should send to you to signify his willingness to do the like for you—surely you would thankfully accept of such a proffer, and would love this prince as your life, who should thus preserve you from death. You are all guilty of high treason and rebellion against the King of heaven in your breach of His Law, and you are condemned by this Law, not to be hanged for it or beheaded, but to be burned for it, to be burned in the fire of hell, which is unquenchable. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Glory, a friend in the court of heaven, Who has procured a pardon for many such malefactors. He sends to you to signify His willingness to procure your pardon, if you will make use of Him! Surely, if you have a sense of your crime and danger, you will apply yourselves unto Christ to save you, and you will not withhold your love from such a one as should show you such unparalleled favor.

### **Direction 3: Interest in Christ**

#### **a. *By faith***

If you would attain true love unto Christ, you must *get an interest in*<sup>11</sup> *Christ*. You must lay hold on Christ by faith that you may be united to Him and related to Him; it is faith that works love in them that believe Christ is precious. But by unbelievers He is slighted and cannot be beloved. Without union to Christ, you will have no affection to Christ. The foundation of love is laid in the relation to the beloved, and this union to and interest in Christ is only by faith. If then you would embrace Christ in the arms of your love, you must first lay hold on Christ and receive Him by the hand of faith. Whatever motives and attractives of love there be in Jesus Christ, they will be none to you without this interest and relation.

Christ is a person most beautiful, most lovely and amiable, but He will not be so in your eyes so long as you are without the eye of faith. He is great and powerful, but so much the worse for you because, without interest in Him, His power is engaged against you. He is pure and holy, and while in your sins you are therefore the more odious in His sight. He is wise and knows all things, therefore is privy to all your sins. He is most true, and therefore will fulfill His threatenings against such as go on still in their trespasses. He is full, but you without interest in His person have no share in His fullness. He is kind, but it is to those that are related to Him—but what is this to you that are unbelievers? He is a shepherd to His sheep, but you are goats; He is a captain to His soldiers, but you are enemies; He is a teacher to His disciples, but you are the devil's scholars; He is a gracious sovereign, but it is to His subjects—yet you are rebels. He is a priest to His people,

---

<sup>11</sup> **get an interest in** – participate in a saving relationship with.

having made satisfaction and making intercession for them; but you trample His blood under [your] feet. He is a friend and benefactor to His people, but you are strangers. He is a brother and a husband to His people, but you stand in none of these relations. He is a redeemer to His people, but you are slaves and captives.

The light that He gives is most sweet, but you are darkness. The life that He imparts is most excellent, but you are dead in sins and trespasses. He gives pardon of sin, but you are under guilt. He gives peace of conscience, but your consciences are still wounded and seared. He gives the joys of the Holy Ghost, but you are in danger of eternal woes. The robes of His righteousness are most rich, but you are naked. The riches of His grace are inestimable, but you are still poor. The dignity of being made the sons of God is most admirable, but you are children of the devil. He gives access unto God in prayer, but you are still at a distance. He gives a title to the kingdom of heaven, but if you continue in your present state, you will be shut at last out of the palace that is above, and be thrust down into the prison of hell that is below.

What then are all these motives to draw forth love to Christ unto you that have no interest in Christ? It is union and relation unto Christ, and interest in Him by faith, that puts life into these motives that they may indeed attract love. Oh, then, be persuaded without further delay to endeavor after this interest in Christ. You must have it or you are lost irrecoverably—you will be miserable eternally. And you may attain this interest. Others have attained it, as mean and as vile as yourselves, and you are called unto Christ. Oh, be persuaded, then, to come unto Christ and join yourselves by faith unto Him, that you may have interest in Christ and in all His benefits.

If you ask me what this faith is that gives an interest in Christ, what it is to believe, I answer out of John 1:12, that it is to receive Christ: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Be persuaded, then, to receive Christ and accept of Him upon the terms of the gospel. Receive and take hold of Christ by the hand of faith.

### ***b. Forsake sin***

And that you may do this,

1). *You must let go your hold of sin.* If you hug sin in your bosom, if you harbor base lusts in your hearts, you cannot receive and give entertainment to Christ there. You must thrust sin out if you would let Christ in.

2). *You must let go your hold on the world.* I don't say you must let it go out of your hands and throw away the estates that God has given—except it be to part with some proportion in a way of mercy and charity, and except you be called to leave all rather than to forego Christ or any of His truths—but you must let the

world go out of your hearts. The world must not sit upon the throne of your hearts; that seat must be reserved for Christ. Chief love and inordinate love to the world and things in the world must be taken off.

3). *You must let go your hold of self.* Your own righteousness and all self-confidences must be parted with. You must be humbled and emptied of yourselves if you would be prepared for the receiving of Jesus Christ, and receiving of that fullness which there is in Him.

### **c. Receive Christ**

And then,

1). *Receive Jesus Christ as your High Priest* to reconcile you unto God, trusting alone in His merits and mediation.

2). *Receive Jesus Christ as your Prophet* to instruct and lead you in all truth by His Word and Spirit.

3). *Receive Jesus Christ as your Sovereign Lord and King* to rule you.

4). *Receive Jesus Christ as your Captain* to tread down your spiritual enemies under your feet.

5). *Receive Jesus Christ in all His relations* of shepherd, friend, brother, and especially in the relation of an husband, and join yourselves to Him and make over yourselves to Him, dedicating and devoting yourselves to Him, and giving up yourselves to be guided, guarded, provided for, and governed by Him.

This is to receive Christ, and this is to believe. This gives union, relation, and interest in the Lord Jesus. And if you do thus join yourselves to Christ by faith, you will quickly feel love to Christ to spring forth, to work and act, and that vigorously; and to bring forth such fruit in the life as shall evidently show that love to Christ is rooted in the heart.

### **Direction 4: Use of Means**

If you would attain truth of love to Jesus Christ, be diligent in the use of all those means<sup>12</sup> that God has appointed for the working of it. I shall instance<sup>13</sup> only in two means.

a. *Be diligent in hearing the Word preached.* As faith cometh by hearing (Rom 10:17), so love to Christ is wrought by the same means. "Hear, and your soul shall live" says the prophet (Isa 55:3); and I may say, hear that your hearts

---

<sup>12</sup> **means** – instruments that God is pleased to use in order to accomplish salvation and sanctification in the hearts of men: the preaching of the Word, Bible reading and study, prayer, singing, giving, baptism, the Lord's Supper, corporate worship, family worship, and godly fellowship with believers.

<sup>13</sup> **instance** – cite as an instance.



may love, that where the eye cannot, the ears may affect the heart with love to the Lord Jesus. While Lydia was hearing Paul preach, her heart was opened (Act 16:14); and while you are hearing ministers preach of Christ, your hearts may be opened to receive Him and to embrace Him in the arms of your dearest love. “As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning” (Act 11:15): while Peter was preaching and the Gentiles were hearing, the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven and fell upon them. And so, while you are hearing the Word, God may give forth of His Spirit to work this grace of love to Jesus Christ in your hearts.

*b. Be diligent and earnest in prayer unto God* for this love. Confess and bewail before Him your lack of this love. Tell Him you deserve a double anathema<sup>14</sup> because you do not love Christ and you cannot of yourselves love Him; that you can as easily lift a mountain to heaven as lift up your hearts unto Christ—but [tell Him of your] desire that He would draw up your love to Christ by His Spirit. Beg of Him that He would put out the fire of lust and all inordinate creature-love, and that He would kindle a fire of love in you to this most lovely Jesus, which no corruption in your hearts may be able to extinguish. And in your prayers, present your hearts to the Lord Jesus. Offer them up freely to Him, and desire that He would accept of them, that He would take hold of them, and take possession of them, and erect His throne in them and an everlasting habitation for Himself.

---

<sup>14</sup> **anathema** – curse.

## 17. HOW TO ATTAIN THIS LOVE WHEN YOUR LOVE IS WEAK

Having given directions how you may attain the truth of love to Christ where you are without it, I come now to give directions how you may attain much of this love to Christ where you have it, but in a low degree and weak measure.

### **Direction 1: Contemplation of Christ**

#### ***a. Consider***

Would you attain much love to Christ? Be much in contemplation of Christ. Consider often what motives there are of love in Him. Press them upon your spirits and labor to awaken and rouse up your hearts unto the vigorous exercise of this love. Spend time in secret retirement; and there think, and think again, of the superlative excellencies and perfections that are in Christ's person, how wonderful and matchless His love is, what heights in it that cannot be reached, what depths in it that cannot be fathomed, what other dimensions that cannot be comprehended. Meditate often of His benefits, how incomparable His love-tokens be. And while you are musing, you may feel the fire burning; while you are looking, you may feel your hearts leaping; while you are taking a view of Him, ere you are aware, your hearts...may run to Him.

Oh, the ravishments of love, the transports of soul that some believers have found in their retired thoughts and views of Christ! Get often into the mount of divine contemplation, and there look upwards unto heaven, and think with yourselves: "Yonder, yonder above the shining sun is the more glorious Son of Righteousness. There at the right hand of the throne of God is my beloved Jesus, the Son of God, seated. And though He be so high above me both in place and dignity, yet He thinks upon me and pleads for me; and many a gift has He there and, sent by His Spirit, conveyed unto me. And, I can ask nothing of the Father in His name, but, if it be really for my good, I have it by His means."

#### ***b. Christ's beauty***

O dear Jesus, how lovely art Thou in Thyself! The darling of heaven! The delight of the Father! The admiration of angels! Oh, what brightness of glory, what shining luster art Thou arrayed with! Thou art clothed with most excellent majesty and honor! Thou art girded with infinite might and power! The beauty of Thy face is most wonderful! The smiles of Thy countenance are most sweet and delightful! And doth this lovely fair One, this fairest of ten thousand, this most ex-

cellent and altogether lovely person, bear a particular love to me?—to such a vile worm as me?—to such a dead dog as me?—to such an undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving sinner as me? Oh, what marvelous kindness is this! What infinite riches of free grace! Does He know me by name? Has He given Himself for me and given Himself to me, and shall not I give Him my heart? Am I written in His book, redeemed with His blood, clothed with His righteousness, beautified with His image? Has He put the dignity of a child of God upon me, and prepared a place in the Father's house for me? Oh, wonderful! Oh, admirable! What shall I render? What returns shall I make?

**c. Praise**

Had I a thousand tongues, should I not employ them all in speaking His praise? Had I a thousand hearts, should I not present them all as too mean for a thank-offering unto Him. And yet am I slow, slow of heart to love this dear and sweet Jesus? Awake, O my soul! Awake from your dullness and stupidity! Shake off your sleep that glues your eye-lids so close together; shake out the dust of the earth that has got into your eyes, and keeps you from the view of your Beloved. Arise, O my soul, and lift up yourself, unfetter your feet, unclog yourself; take the wing and mount up above the sky and visible heavens, even to the place where the lovely and dear Jesus is! Take your leave of the world and all things therein. Bid farewell to the flattering honors, the deceitful riches, the glancing pleasures that are here below. Bid adieu to them and leave them to those that place their chiefest happiness in them. If earth has your body for a while, yet let it have thy heart and chiefest affections no more.

Come, O my soul, ascend and soar aloft unto the Heaven of heavens. The way unto the Holy of Holies is accessible, the veil is rent,<sup>1</sup> the Forerunner is entered, and you may have entrance too—with your thoughts, desires, loves, hopes, and joys. There you may see, view, admire, and embrace your dearest Lord. There your heart may find a fit object for its love, even your dearest Lord Jesus—Who will not reject and despise you, but give kind entertainment<sup>2</sup> unto your love, and will give the fullest and sweetest returns. There your heart may find a room to dispose of itself, and not only a lodging like that of a wayfaring man for a night, but an habitation wherein to dwell and to take up its eternal abode. Let your heart be your forerunner, that when your body drops off from you, you may know where to betake yourself, and find ready entertainment there where your heart has been long before.

---

<sup>1</sup> See *The Rent Veil* by Horatius Bonar; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

<sup>2</sup> **entertainment** – reception.

#### ***d. Self versus Christ***

Why do you hang downwards, O my soul? Why do you bend so much to the earth and earthly things? What is there here below that is not beneath you, and altogether unworthy of your love? How empty, vain, and thorny are these things? Don't waste your time, weary yourself for very vanity; don't prick and wound yourself with these things anymore. What ails you, O my soul, that you are so backward to the love of Christ? Is it because you cannot see Christ with the eyes of your body? You shall see Him with those eyes hereafter, when He comes in His glory, and your body is raised and repaired, and fitted to bear such a sight. You cannot see the wind, but you hear its noise and feel its blasts; and do you not hear Christ's voice in His Word? Do you not feel the breathings of His Spirit in His ordinances? You are invisible yourself, O my soul, and are you so drenched in flesh that visible objects shall have more power to draw down your heart, than this most glorious object (though now invisible) shall have power to draw up your heart? Do you question and doubt of His love to thee? And does this damp and discourage your affection?

Whose image is this that is engraven upon you? Is it not the image of Christ? What writing is that upon your heart? Is it not God's Law written by Christ's Spirit? Whose deckings and adornings have you got about you? What beauty is this that is put upon you? Is it not Christ's comeliness? Where have you those bracelets, that ring, those jewels, that chain of graces? Are they not Christ's love-tokens that He has given you—and yet will you doubt of His love?

If you feel corruption strong, yet do you not perceive some grace, although it be weak? Have you not some love to Christ, although it be low? Are not your desires chiefly after Him, which evidences that your chief love is to Him? And is it so with any but such whom Christ loves? Does not Christ love first (1Jo 4:19), and yet will you question His love? Banish then your fears; silence your doubts, O my soul. Rouse up yourself and climb up by Jacob's ladder, which is let down to you from heaven; and settle your love upon Jesus Christ and those things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Col 3:1-2).

Such retired contemplations of Christ, and soliloquies<sup>3</sup> and pleadings with your own souls when alone by yourselves, will tend exceedingly to the promotion of your love unto Christ.

#### **Direction 2: Reading and Studying the Scriptures**

Would you have much love to Christ? Be much in reading and studying the Scriptures. The Scriptures are a glass in which Christ may be seen. He cannot be seen face-to-face in this world: this is the happiness of the triumphant Church in

---

<sup>3</sup> **soliloquies** – talking to oneself as if alone.

heaven, not of the militant Church upon the earth. What may here be discerned of Christ is in the glass of the Scriptures and gospel ordinances. This is that glass spoken of: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2Co 3:18). Christ is the glory of the Lord, the brightness of His Father's glory. Would you have much love to Him? [Then] be often looking, viewing, and beholding of Him in the glass of the Scriptures. By much beholding of Him, you may be transformed more and more into the likeness of His holiness, and into the likeness of His love, which is glory begun! The Scriptures have the image of Christ engraven upon them. The image of the Father is upon the Son, and the image of the Son is upon the Scriptures. There you may see the picture of Christ, the beauty of Christ. At least, some lineaments are there drawn by the hand of God, although not fully and to the life; I mean, such you will see in Him when you come to behold Him face to face in heaven. Yet His beauty is drawn in such proportions and with such shadows as you are now capable of beholding.

Would you have much love unto Christ, Whom you have never seen? Look much upon His picture and image in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are Christ's love-letters. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, Christ sends seven epistles to the seven Asian churches. There are many epistles and love-letters, as it were, in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, wherein Christ gives most kind expressions of most endeared love unto His people. Read much and study Christ's love-letters, especially those parts of the Scriptures wherein Christ expresses most of His kindness and love. See how kindly Christ expresses Himself (John 14:1-3, 13, 16-23, 27; 15:9, 13-16; 16:7, 22, 24, 26-27, 33; 17:9-11, 15, 20-24; 20:17). Read often and consider such places. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16), and this will feed and maintain your love to Christ. This is a means to have Christ dwell in your hearts, not only by faith, but also by most endeared love.

### **Direction 3: Prayer**

Would you have much love to Christ? Be much in prayer unto God for this love. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father" (Eph 6:23). Not only peace is from God, Who is called the "God of peace" (Heb 13:20), and faith from God, Who works it by His almighty power, but also love is from God, Who is the "God of love" (2Co 13:11). He circumcises the heart to love Himself and to love His Son. This love of Christ is a grace of the Spirit that God does freely give and powerfully work: the beginnings of it, the increase of it, [and] all the measures and degrees of it are from Him. If you would attain high measures of love to Christ, you must apply yourselves unto God in prayer, and therein diligently seek to Him for it.

If you would have much love to Christ in your hearts, you must be often at the throne of grace upon your knees and there humbly acknowledge, if not the want,<sup>4</sup> yet the weakness of your love to Christ. Bewail your sins, which damp your affections, and earnestly request that He would work your hearts unto a strong love. Be importunate in prayer for this: follow God day by day with the same requests; plead with Him for it; fill your mouths with arguments; and fill your arguments with faith and fervent desires. Tell Him, whatever loveliness and love there be in Christ, whatever attractives to draw forth your love, yet of yourselves you are utterly unable to put forth the least motion of true affection unto Christ. Tell Him that this love to Christ, though it be your duty, yet it is His gift that you ought to act it—but this you cannot do unless He works it. Tell Him how easily He can enkindle this fire of love to Christ in your bosoms and blow it up into a flame. Tell Him that He has bid you to ask and you shall have, that whatever you ask according to His will He hears, and that it is His will you should love Christ, not only truly but also strongly.

Tell Him you desire much love to Christ, and that these desires do come from Himself, and therefore earnestly desire the fulfilling of them. Tell Him [that] if you do not love Christ much, you shall be apt to overlove the creature,<sup>5</sup> which will be displeasing to Him. Therefore request that you may have such a love to Christ as may overpower all other love, and keep your hearts from all inordinacy of affections to anything beneath and besides the Lord Jesus Christ. Plead how much it will be for His glory that you should have much love unto Christ, that hereby you shall be enabled to honor Him the more in the world. Plead how much it will be for your good. Tell Him: if you asked corn and wine and oil; if you asked wealth and honors, and creature-delights in abundance, they might be a snare to you, and for your hurt; but a strong love to Christ is needful and useful, and, be sure, will be for your good. Urge His promise of circumcising the heart to love Him, and plead His faithfulness. And if you be thus importunate<sup>6</sup> in prayer for much love to Christ, and will not be denied, you shall not be denied!

#### **Direction 4: Faith**

Would you have much love to Christ? Get much faith! Faith works love both to the Father and to the Son. According to the measure of your faith, so will the measure of your love be. Such as are without any faith are without any love; such as have but a feeble faith have but a weak love; and such as have the strongest

---

<sup>4</sup> **want** – complete lack.

<sup>5</sup> **creature** – what God has made, including ourselves, friends, family, food, health, possessions, and other good things of this life.

<sup>6</sup> **importunate** – persistent.

faith have the strongest love. The strongest faith gives the clearest discovery of Christ's infinite excellencies and perfections.

It is not the eye of sense that discerns Christ; neither is it the eye of reason that discerns Him. Whatever discoveries we have of Christ, it is by revelation;<sup>7</sup> and this is discernable only by faith. "Faith is...the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1), and the unseen Christ is evident by faith to be the most excellent person and the most suitable object of love—and the more evident the object of love is, the stronger will the love be. Moreover, faith is not only the eye of the soul to discern Christ, but also the hand of the soul, not only to take hold on Him, but also to receive from Him of His fullness—grace for grace, and by consequence, more of this grace of love to Him.

Our communion with Christ is by faith. The more intimate acquaintance and fellowship we have with those whom we love, the more endeared will be our love. The strongest faith brings us unto the greatest intimacy, fellowship, and familiarity with Christ, and therefore it is a means of the strongest love. Endeavor then to get a strong faith, and to live daily in the powerful exercise thereof. The more you live by faith, the more you will dwell in the love of Christ.

#### **Direction 5: The Spirit**

Would you have much love unto Christ? Labor for much of the Spirit. Labor for much of the light of the Spirit. There must be not only the glass of the Scriptures and the eye of faith, but also the light of the Spirit, that you may have a clear discerning of this lovely Lord Jesus. Labor for much of the operation of the Spirit. The Spirit is like wind to blow up the sparks of love in your hearts into a flame. Labor for the inhabitation of the Spirit, and that the promise may be made good to you that Christ gives to His disciples: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (Joh 14:16-17).

#### **Direction 6: Evidences**

Would you have much love unto Christ? Labor for clear evidences of His love unto you. The apprehensions of Christ's loveliness may excite to some love, but the full well-grounded persuasions of Christ's love to you will heighten your love to Christ above all. Doubts of Christ's love cause fears, and fears contract the heart and therefore are opposite to love, which is the expansion and enlargement of the heart. "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1Jo 4:18): the more love, the less fear;

<sup>7</sup> **revelation** – The knowledge God gives to His creatures, especially His self-disclosure...in the Bible as His inspired Word.—Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*.

and the more doubts and fears, the less love. Such as doubt much of Christ's love to them, they may love Christ truly, but they cannot love Christ strongly. You will love a less lovely person that loves you, more than a more lovely person that hates you. The love of the person beloved is a most amiable qualification and strong attractive—yea, one of the greatest incentives and inducements unto love. Get, then, a persuasion of the infinite love to you of this infinitely lovely person, that you may be able to say with Paul, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

Look diligently into the Word of God, and find out the characters there of those that are beloved by Christ, and then look narrowly into yourselves, and see whether your face will not answer that face in the looking glass of the Scriptures. See whether you cannot find the lineaments of the "new man" within you, whether you have not experienced a gracious change. Is there not light where there was darkness? Is there not life where there was death? Is there not love where there was hatred? Is there not the Law of God written where the law of sin did command all? Is not the bias of your wills and hearts Godward, Christ-ward, and heaven-ward?—which heretofore was only sin-ward, earthward, and hell-ward?

Pray earnestly unto God that He would give you a full assurance that, if you are indeed effectually called—if you are indeed united and related unto Jesus Christ—you may know it and no longer doubt thereof. In a word, seek diligently after the manifestations of Christ's love in all the ways of His ordinances. Rest not in the outside of ordinances, but seek after Christ *in* ordinances. Follow Him from Sabbath to Sabbath, from ordinance to ordinance; and always be looking for Him and looking towards Him till He turn about and look upon you, and give you a gracious smile. Seek and wait for that manifestation of Himself that He has promised to him who loves Him (Joh 14:21). Wait for His mission of the Holy Ghost from heaven (1Pe 1:12) to shed abroad the sense of His love into your hearts (Rom 5:5).

And if you did know assuredly and had a sense hereof given unto you by the Spirit of Christ, oh, the joys that then you would have *in* Him! Oh, the love that then you would have *to* Him! As your joys would be unspeakable, so your love would be unspeakable too. Such a warmth of heart and burning of love to Christ you would feel within you, as is beyond the rhetoric<sup>8</sup> of the tongue to set forth.

### **Direction 7: Fight against Sin**

Would you have much love to Christ? Get much hatred of sin, and accordingly watch and pray, and strive and fight against sin as the worst of evils, as that which so much displeases your Lord. Bewail sins of daily incursion, and labor that your

---

<sup>8</sup> **rhetoric** – eloquent language.



sins of infirmity may be less every day than other. Take heed of sins of sudden surprise, but chiefly of designed sins, and that you comply not with any temptations unto grosser miscarriages, which, like water cast upon the fire of your love to Christ, will put out the flame and leave only a few unperceivable sparks in the corner of your hearts. Suffer not sin to have any room in your hearts, or if it will abide and you cannot thrust it quite out, let it not have a quiet habitation within you. Disturb sin as much as you can. Wage war every day with your remaining lusts. Let no day pass over your heads without giving some blows, some thrusts and wounds, to sin.

Straiten the room of sin in your hearts as much as may be; the more room sin has in your hearts, the less room Christ will have there. Particularly take heed of inordinate love to the world and the things in the world, the prevalence of which love will dampen your love to Christ. By how much more the world gets of your love, by so much the less Christ will have of it. A subordinate love you may have to persons and things in the world, but let no person or thing have your chief love, but only Christ. Love nothing for itself with an abstracted love, but love all inferior things with inferior love. Love all under the Lord, and in the Lord, and for the Lord's sake. Get all inordinate affections to the world crucified by the cross of Christ. You must have dying affections to perishing things, if you would have a living and active love to the ever-living Jesus.

### **Direction 8: Associations**

Would you have much love unto Christ? Associate yourselves most with those that have most love unto Christ. You may fetch light from their light, and you may fetch warmth from their fire. Dead coals are enkindled by the living, and your dead hearts may be enkindled with love to Christ by the warm discourse of those that have warm hearts. Be ready to speak of Christ and for Christ in any company as you have opportunity, and diligently watch for an occasion. Shut your ears against and reprove profane and filthy communication. Divert that which is vain and frothy, and be ready to begin and promote that which is serious and savory, that which is gracious and may tend to your own and others edification. Study the art, and practice it, of provoking all whom you converse with, not unto strife and contention, but unto this love and affection unto the Lord Jesus Christ. And while you are endeavoring to warm others with this love, you may be warmed yourselves.

### **Direction 9: Exercise of Love**

And lastly, would you have much love unto Christ? Be much in the exercise of this love—hereby it is increased and heightened. Use legs and have legs; and if you act this love frequently, it will hereby get strength and activity. Every day en-

deavor to put forth some vigorous acts of love unto Jesus Christ. In your ordinary callings and secular business and employment, you may send up some looks of love unto Jesus Christ in your ejaculations.<sup>9</sup>

But especially in the duties of God's immediate worship, labor that your love may flow out unto Christ most vigorously. In your daily secret devotion and family worship, let love to Christ draw forth tears from your eyes, at least cause grief and sorrow in your hearts in the acknowledgement of your sins whereby He has been dishonored and displeased. Let love to Christ draw forth earnest desires after Christ, and those communications, manifestations, and consolations that He gives to none but such as are His. Let love to Christ put requests into your mouths, arguments into your requests, and fervor into your arguments—in your pleadings with Him at the throne of grace for further supplies of His grace, and that you may be brought into more intimacy of acquaintance with Him. Every day you should express your love to Christ, especially on the Lord's Day, when almost the whole day is to be spent in public and private exercises of religious worship.<sup>10</sup>

In all, your love to Christ should be in exercise. In your attendances upon Him in ordinances, you must bring not only your bodies before Him, but present your hearts unto Him. This you should be careful to do in public prayer, hearing of the Word, preaching, and singing psalms. Often should you endeavor in every ordinance to lift up your hearts unto the Lord, but above all when you approach the Lord's Table. All your graces should there and then be in exercise, especially this grace of love to Jesus Christ. Your eye there should affect your heart when you see the representations of your crucified Lord. Think what manner of love He did bear to you that He should submit Himself unto such a death for you—how should this affect your hearts! And if ever, then your love to Christ should show itself, and act with the greatest vigor and strength.

---

<sup>9</sup> **ejaculations** – short prayers uttered quickly and spontaneously in response to your current situation.

<sup>10</sup> See Free Grace Broadcaster 233, *The Lord's Day*; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

## 18. WHEREIN TO SHOW THIS LOVE FOR CHRIST

Having given directions how to attain love to Christ in the truth and in the strength of it, I come now to the last sort of directions: wherein you should show your love to Jesus Christ.

### **A. General Direction: Obey Christ**

More generally, show your love to Christ in your obedience unto Christ: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Joh 14:15). Be faithful in the performance of all known duties that Christ commands, and be careful in the forbearance of all known sins that Christ forbids. Let your great care be to please Christ, whoever is displeased; and your great fear be of offending Christ, whoever be offended with your strictness. Show your love, 1) In the sincerity of your obedience, 2) In the willingness of your obedience, 3) In the universality of your obedience, [and] 4) In the constancy of your obedience.

#### **Direction 1: Sincerity of Obedience**

Show your love to Christ in the sincerity of your obedience. Hypocrites will do some things that Christ commands, but it is from carnal motives and with carnal designs. But let love to Christ be the motive and the honor of Christ the end<sup>1</sup> of your obedience. Obey Christ because you love Him and with a design to please Him. What you do, do heartily unto the Lord; and above all things, desire and endeavor that what you do may find acceptance with Him. “Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him” (2Co 5:9).

#### **Direction 2: Willingness of Obedience**

Show your love to Christ in the willingness of your obedience. Some will obey Christ, but it is with great backwardness. They will perform duties, but they are burdensome, a weariness, and toilsome, and the commandments of Christ are grievous unto them. They are scarce ready unto any duty, but when they are scourged unto it by the rods of affliction, or spurred and pricked forward by the goads of conscience. Oh, the listlessness and indisposition in the most unto the most spiritual part of the service of Christ!—which is an evident proof of the defect of love, either in the truth of it, or at least in the measure and degree of it. Let your love show itself in the willingness of your obedience. Serve the Lord with a

---

<sup>1</sup> **end** – purpose; aim.

willing and ready mind, with alacrity<sup>2</sup> and cheerfulness of spirit, looking upon the service of Christ as your honor, and esteeming every duty to be your privilege. If you have any constraints unto obedience, let them be the constraints of love (2Co 5:14). If you be forced to obey Christ, let there be no violence but the violence of love. If you be dragged to duty, let it be with no other cords than the cords of love. Let love be the spur and goad to prick you forward, that you may not only walk, but run in the ways of Christ's commandments with an enlarged heart.

### **Direction 3: Universality of Obedience**

Show your love to Christ in the universality of your obedience. Hypocrites will perform some duties that are for their turn and will serve their carnal designs; other duties they omit and totally neglect. Let your love to Christ discover itself in your respect to *all* His commandments. Though you cannot here attain perfection of obedience, yet let your obedience be universal. Obey Christ not only in open duties, which men are witnesses of, but also in secret duties and spiritual duties, which depend upon the exercise of the mind—such as meditation, contemplation, self-examination, and ejaculation—as also in the spiritual part of all duties, which no eye can be witness unto but the eye of God. Hereby, you may be distinguished from all hypocrites in the world.

### **Direction 4: Constancy of Obedience**

Show your love to Christ in the constancy of your obedience. “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal 5:7). Some hypocrites are zealous professors for a while, and at first setting out seem to outstrip many that are sincere; but they soon tire and are weary, not only *in* well-doing but *of* it. They quickly stumble and fall, and not only fall down, but fall off; not only fall back, but fall away and turn fearful apostates. Show your love to Christ not only in setting out well, but in continuing your Christian course well, unto the end of the course of your lives. Begin well, and patiently continue in well-doing. Persevere in your obedience: “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal 6:9). And if you be “faithful unto death,” Christ has promised to “give thee a crown of life” (Rev 2:10).

## **B. Particular Directions**

More particularly, show your love to Christ, 1) In your learning, keeping, asserting, and maintaining of Christ's truths; 2) In your public spiritedness and zeal for Christ's honor and interest; 3) In your vigorous resistance and opposition to Christ's enemies; 4) In your following of Christ's example; 5) In your readiness to

---

<sup>2</sup> **alacrity** – cheerful readiness; eagerness.

take up and patiently to bear Christ's cross; 6) In your desires after Christ's presence here, and longing for Christ's second appearance at the Last Day.

### **Direction 1: Keep Christ's Truths**

Show your love to Christ in your learning, keeping, asserting, and maintaining Christ's truths.

*Learn Christ's truths:* Acquaint yourselves by diligent reading of the Scriptures, and other books that may be a help hereunto, with all fundamental truths of the Christian religion in the first place. And so go on and proceed further to learn those truths that are superstructory.<sup>3</sup> Whatever truths you find a foundation for in the Scriptures, which are the Word of truth, receive them—not only in the light of them, but also in the love of them. If the branches of truths be in your heads, the leaves of them in your profession, and the fruit of them in your actions, let the root of them be in your hearts.

*Hold Christ's truths:* Having learned the truths of Christ as they are in Jesus, let them not hang loose in your understandings, but get them fastened, fixed, and close girt about the loins of your minds. Hold the truths of Christ fast; prize them above all jewels. Don't part with them upon any terms. Let all go—estate, liberty, and life itself—rather than any of this rich treasure that Christ has entrusted you with.

*Assert the truths of Christ:* Be not ashamed or afraid to own any truths of Christ in the most adulterous and gainsaying generation. Profess your belief of Christ and of the truths of Christ. Endeavour that the light of these truths may shine abroad and cast forth such bright beams in the dark world where you live, that others may be brought hereby unto the knowledge of the truth.

*Endeavor to maintain Christ's truths:* Earnestly contend for the doctrine of faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3); endeavor to convince gainsayers, and to defend Christ's truths against those corrupt and erroneous opinions and doctrine that, like leaven, are very apt to spread and infect the minds of men.

### **Direction 2: Promote Christ's Honor**

Show your love to Christ in your public spiritedness and zeal for Christ's honor and interest. Let your affections be public—not private, narrow, contracted, and centering in self. Let your love be a public and general love. Love not only relations, but love all Christ's disciples, though of different persuasions and interests, because of the image of Christ. And love not only your friends that love you, but also your enemies that hate you, because of the command of Christ (Mat 5:44). Let your desires be public desires: desire the welfare of the universal

---

<sup>3</sup> **superstructory** – pertaining to the foundational framework; supporting the rest.

Church<sup>4</sup> and of all God's people throughout the world. And accordingly pray for their peace and prosperity; and endeavor, as you have opportunity, to promote the public good more than your own private advantage. Seek not your own things, but the things of Jesus Christ (Phi 2:21).

Let your griefs be public griefs. Grieve not only for your own sins, but also for the sins of others, whereby Christ is dishonored in the world. Grieve not only for your own afflictions, but also for the afflictions of Joseph: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Heb 13:3). You are in the same mystical body with all Christ's afflicted members, and when some members suffer, the rest should suffer too by way of sympathy. Bleeding in their wounds and grieving in their sorrows, be ready also to relieve any, especially Christ's disciples, when they are in distress and want, according to your capacity and as you have opportunity.

Employ all your talents for your Master's glory, and endeavor to promote the interest of the Lord Jesus unto the utmost of your abilities.

*a. In reference to those that are without*

If you are called yourselves, labor to call others unto Christ, as Andrew called Peter, and Phillip called Nathaniel, unto the Messiah (Joh 1:40-41, 44-45). If you have found the Messiah—or rather, have been found of Him—let your love to Christ and love to souls prompt you to endeavor the conversion of others that are your relations, your friends, and acquaintances.

Put your unconverted friends in mind of their miserable estates while under the guilt and reigning power of sin, while slaves to the devil and their own lusts. Mind them of death and the fearful consequences thereof to all unpardoned sinners. Tell them of Christ: that He is the only Savior and Redeemer of mankind, and how able and willing He is to save them if they seek after Him and apply themselves unto Him. Tell them that not long since you were in the same estate with themselves, living in the practice of the same sins and going on in the same way to destruction; and that the Lord has showed mercy unto you in your conversion and bringing you into a state of salvation. Tell them that there is mercy also for them if they look after it, that God's grace is most free, His mercy most plentiful; that Christ is most gracious and casts out none that come unto Him. Tell them of the amiableness of Christ's person, of the surpassing love that He has shown to fallen mankind in His dying for them; and that though He were dead, yet He is alive and lives forevermore to intercede for all them that make choice of Him, and make use of Him for their advocate. Therefore, persuade them that they

---

<sup>4</sup> **universal Church** – the spiritual Church universal, which includes all true believers throughout the world and throughout all of time, as differentiated from the visible church, comprised of local assemblies of professing Christians.

would break off their sins by repentance, which otherwise will be the ruin both of their bodies and of their souls in hell, and without delay that they would come unto Christ and accept of Him upon gospel terms.

If any of you cannot manage these arguments well yourselves, persuade them, if you can, to hear such ministers and sermons as through God's blessing have been effectual for your conversion, and thus you may be instrumental to augment the kingdom of Christ, which is one of the best ways of expressing your love unto Christ.

*b. In reference to them that are within*

Labor to promote the interest of Christ among them that are truly gracious by vigorous endeavors to strengthen and establish them, to quicken and encourage them in the ways of the Lord. Communicate the experiences that you have had, as you see there is real need, and it may tend not so much to your praise as your Master's honor. Labor in your places to be both shining and burning lights; be forward to every good word and work. Look upon yourselves as the devoted servants of Christ, and that you are not your own, and therefore lay out yourselves to the utmost for Him. Give all diligence to glorify Him with your bodies and spirits, with your estates and interests, with your gifts and talents—all which are His, and ought to be at His devotion.

**Direction 3: Oppose Christ's Enemies**

Show your love to Christ in your vigorous resistance and opposition to Christ's enemies. There are three grand enemies of Christ that you are, by your baptism, engaged to fight against: namely, the devil, the flesh, and the world—which war both against Christ and against your souls. This trinity of adversaries agree in one, and combine together against His anointed, doing their utmost endeavor to break His bands, to untie His cords, and to unhinge His government. They would pluck the crown off of Christ's head could they reach it, and the scepter out of His hand. They would divest Christ, if they could, of all His power here on earth, and confine Him to His territories in heaven.

But all their attempts in this kind have been and will be in vain: Christ has tried the strength of these enemies and has vanquished them—but still some life and power is left with them to war against the holy seed. You are Christ's soldiers, listed under His banner. Show your fidelity and your love to your Captain and General in manfully maintaining the spiritual combat against His and your spiritual enemies. Fight the good fight of faith. Resist unto blood; don't yield upon any account. Disdainfully turn away the eye and ear when these enemies would entice and allure you, and stoutly make resolute opposition against them when they do most furiously assault you. Harken to no suggestions of the devil, temp-

tations of the world, or motions of the flesh that would induce and draw you into ways of sin, or that would force and drive you out of the ways of Christ. Resist, oppose, and labor to gain some victories over these adversaries every day. Especially get conquest over the flesh, and the other two will be soon vanquished.

Christ showed His love to you in submitting Himself to be crucified for you; you show your love to Christ in crucifying your flesh, with its affections and lusts, for His sake, in your self-denial and mortifying the deeds of the body. When you deny your carnal reason, your carnal wisdom, your carnal will, your carnal affections, your carnal interest, and all inordinacies of your sensual appetite for the sake of Christ; when you crush pride, envy, revenge, malice, inordinate anger, inordinate love, inordinate desire, inordinate grief, lustfulness, and all evil concupiscence<sup>5</sup> for the sake and because of the command of Christ—all these are acts and evidences of love to Christ, and herein you should exercise yourselves daily.

#### **Direction 4: Follow Christ's Example**

Show your love to Christ in your following of His example. Discover<sup>6</sup> your affection unto Him in your imitation of Him, in writing after His copy, in treading in His steps, in walking as Christ Himself walked when He was here upon the earth. Show your love to Christ by laboring after likeness unto Christ, that you may be like Him both in your inward disposition and in your outward conversation.<sup>7</sup> Christ was lowly; be you humble and mean in your own esteem. Christ was meek; be you gentle, easy to be entreated, and not easily provoked. Christ loved God; let God be the object of your love. Christ hated sin; let sin also be the object of your hatred. Christ contemned the world; get your affections crucified unto it. Christ was compassionate to those that were in distress; labor for the like bowels yourself. Christ used to worship publicly in the synagogues, to pray with His disciples, and to spend time also in secret prayer—give yourself to attendance in the public assemblies of God's people, worship God in your families, and be often upon your knees at the throne of grace in secret.

Christ's mind was a heavenly mind; let the same mind be in you as was in Christ. Christ's will was submissive to His Father's will; let the same will be in you as was in Christ. Christ's words were gracious and edifying; let your speech be always with grace, savory, and which may be for edification (Col 4:6; Eph 4:29). Christ's life was an active life, He was always doing good, and He was exactly holy in all His actions—be you active and diligent in the service of God by doing good to others, and be holy as Christ was holy in all manner of conversation.

---

<sup>5</sup> **concupiscence** – strong desire, especially sexual lust.

<sup>6</sup> **discover** – reveal; show.

<sup>7</sup> **conversation** – conduct; lifestyle.



Thus should you show your love to Christ in following Christ's example, and in imitating Him in everything wherein you are capable of such imitation.

### **Direction 5: Bear Christ's Cross**

Show your love to Christ in your readiness to take up and patiently bear Christ's cross. I don't say you should desire sufferings for Christ, but sure I am that strong love to Christ will not permit you to decline them. Don't go out of God's way *for* them; neither go out of God's way *from* them. If you meet with the cross in the way of duty, don't either turn back or start aside; but cheerfully take it up. And when you have got it up, patiently bear it and don't throw it off till God takes it off. When it is your duty to suffer for Christ, look upon it also to be your privilege. And be glad of the opportunity, rejoicing that you have anything to part with for the sake of Christ—if it be good name, or good estate, or good friends; if it be liberty or life itself. Such expressions of love are very honorable and very pleasing to your Lord and Master.

### **Direction 6: Desire Christ's Presence**

And lastly, show your love to Christ in your desires after Christ's presence here, and in your longing for His second appearance at the Last Day.

*a. Desire Christ's gracious presence here* and the manifestations thereof, that according to His promises He would come unto you, that He would draw near, and that you might feel that He is near. Desire that you might have clearer discoveries of Christ and more intimate communion and fellowship with Christ. Above all company and fellowship, desire the company, fellowship, and acquaintance with Christ that you might walk with Him and converse with Him, and that there might be a daily intercourse<sup>8</sup> between Christ and your souls—and that all distances between you and strangeness might be removed. Let your love express itself in desires after Christ when He is absent and in delights when He is present. Rejoice in the Lord exceedingly when He manifests Himself unto you graciously. Admire His beauty and delight in His smiles; admire His love and delight in the persuasions of His favor. Let the actings of your love, and the workings of it, be such to your Beloved daily.

*b. Desire also and long for the second appearance of Christ* at the Last Day. When He says, "Surely I come quickly," say, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20). Look upon time as slow of heel and wing so that it runs no faster, that it flies no swifter. Look to the end of time and long for it, because then with these eyes you shall see Him Whom your soul loves, because then you shall see Christ come down from the throne of God with such brightness of majesty and brightness of beauty, as will transport you with wonder and joy.

---

<sup>8</sup> **intercourse** – communion.

Say: “When, Lord Jesus, wilt Thou take to Thyself Thy great power, and clothe Thyself with Thy authority, and come down to judge the world? When wilt Thou open the everlasting gates of heaven, which have been shut so long? When wilt Thou descend from heaven with a shout, with the sound of the great trumpet, and send Thine angels to gather all Thine elect from the four winds, that all who love Thee may meet in one society? When shall we put on our garments of immortality, and be caught up in the clouds to meet Thee in the day of Thy triumph? When shall the day of our coronation come, and of our admission into the glorious mansions that Thou hast prepared for us in the glorious palace that is above? When wilt Thou show us Thyself, and give us to behold Thee face to face? When wilt Thou shew us the Father, and give us to behold Him immediately<sup>9</sup> without a glass? When wilt Thou show us Thy glory, which Thou hadst with the Father before the World was; and give us not only to see it, but also to share in it? When wilt Thou open the treasures of Thy love, and receive us into the nearest, closest, and sweetest embracements thereof, and give us to drink of those rivers of pleasures that are with Thee? Oh, hasten Lord, hasten Thy glorious appearance, that Thou mayest be glorified before the whole world; and we be glorified with Thee, that we may be then taken to live with Thee and reign with Thee, and be made perfectly happy in the full and everlasting enjoyment of Thee.”

Thus I have done with these directions, the last thing in this use of exhortation.

---

<sup>9</sup> **immediately** – directly, without anything in between.

## 19. CONCLUSION

And what do you now say after all motives to excite and persuade you to the love of Christ and directions therein? Shall all be in vain?

### **A. To Those without Christ**

What do you say, sinners? Shall Christ have your hearts or no? Will you harbor base lusts in your hearts, which will damn you and keep out the Lord Jesus Christ, Who alone can save you? Shall I gain no hearts for Christ by all my sermons that I have preached concerning the love of Christ? My Lord and Master has sent me to woo you, to win your hearts for Him; may I speed<sup>1</sup> or no? Shall my message be accepted, and Jesus Christ, the most lovely person, find entertainment with you? If any person or thing in the world that you most dearly love, do so well deserve your love, [then] lock your ears still against all my words and let them perish like an empty sound in the air; lock your hearts against Christ, Who stands knocking at the door, and give an absolute and peremptory refusal to give Him any room there. But if in the whole world you cannot find out a suitable beloved besides Christ; if there be nothing here below but is unworthy of your hearts; if all inferior things, while they have your chief love, debase you and defile you; and, unless your hearts be taken off from them, will certainly ruin and destroy you everlastingly—oh, then be persuaded without any further delay to open the everlasting doors of your hearts, to [receive] Christ into them, and set Christ up in the highest seat of your affections. Oh, be persuaded to give Christ your chief love, to give Him your heart, and your whole heart. With grief and hatred, let go your hold of sin and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ in the arms of your dearest love.

And then I would say to you, as our Savior did to Zacchaeus when he gave Him entertainment in his house: “This day is salvation come” unto you (Luk 19:9). Oh, happy day unto you! Oh, happy you that ever you were born, if this day Christ should be heartily entertained by you! This then would be the day of your conversion, in which the angels would rejoice; and though grief and trouble might invade you for a while because of your sin, yet this would make way for your spiritual joy. Weeping might endure for a night, but joy would come in the morning<sup>2</sup> (Psa 30:5). But, oh, the joy that you will then have in the day of your corona-

---

<sup>1</sup> **speed** – succeed.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Night of Weeping and The Morning of Joy* by Horatius Bonar (1808-1889); available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

tion, when all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes and you shall have admission into the glorious presence of the Lord—where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore (Psa 16:11).

## **B. To Those with Christ**

And what do you say, believers? You that have some love to Christ, shall this doctrine, and these sermons that I have preached, be a means to raise and heighten your love? Your love has been too much mixed: will you love Christ more purely? Your love has been very weak: will you love Christ more strongly? Your love to Christ has been but a spark: shall it now break forth into a flame? After such blowings, shall there be no burnings? When you think of Christ's person so amiable, His love so incomparable, His benefits so inestimable—shall not this fire your hearts? And will you not now love Him more dearly and ardently than ever? Will you be persuaded to get off your hearts from earth and earthly things, and get up your hearts to your Lord, which is in heaven—and to settle your love there upon Him, so as never to withdraw it from Him anymore? Will you love the Lord Jesus much, Whom you can never love too much? Will you now dwell in the love of Christ, and be more frequent and fervent in the actings of it?

Then, oh, what comfort would you find in your love!—and what sweetness in the sense of Christ's love! This would be the surest evidence that Christ loves you, because Christ loves first. And how would this sweeten your passage through the valley of affliction and through the valley of death. This would sweeten a bitter cup and make a sweet cup more sweet. In life, the sense of Christ's love will be better than life; but at death, this will be the only stay and support that you can have—nothing else can give any well-grounded comfort in a dying hour. Death rages and plays the tyrant everywhere, shoots his arrows hither and thither. Sometimes he smites those that are elder than yourselves, and sometimes those that are younger; sometimes those that are weaker than yourselves, sometimes those that are stronger; sometimes those that are better, sometimes those that are worse; sometimes the righteous are smitten, sometimes the wicked; sometimes the profane, and sometimes the professors—that all might be awakened to prepare.

And what is it that can give you comfort when you come to the sides of the pit? You may have the love of your dear yokefellows weeping and mourning at your bedside; children, kindred, and friends wringing their hands and looking with a pitiful countenance upon you, grieving to part with you—but what comfort can all their love yield unto your departing spirits? Their love may disturb you and make you the more unwilling to die and leave them, because they are so unwilling to part with you. But the love of Christ, and sense thereof, will be a

comfort indeed, because He is a friend whom you are not departing from, but going unto.

And, oh, the delight that then you may have, when friends look most sad and death looks most grim, when the trembling joints, the clammy sweats, the intermittent pulse, the falling jaws, the rattling throat, and other symptoms give notice of near approaching death! Then to think, "I am now come not only to the door of eternity, but also to the gate of my Father's house, where many saints are gone before me and many angels are attending for me, and where my dearly beloved Jesus is, and has prepared for my reception and eternal habitation. Here are friends about my bedside, who ere long will convey my body to the grave to be fed upon by worms. Here are angels also by my bedside, waiting for my soul, that so soon as it is loosened from this dying carcass, they may convey me to the heavenly paradise. Within a few minutes now, I shall be with my dearest Lord, where my faith will be swallowed up in vision, my hope in fruition, and my love will come to perfection. Oh, the glorious light that there and then will shine into every corner of my mind! Oh, the love, joy, and ineffable delight when I come to see, enjoy, and live forever with my most dearly Beloved!"

This, this only, will make you willing to die, and this sense of Christ's love will effectually sweeten your passage through the dark entry of death.



*APPENDIX*

*CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF  
UNTO THEM THAT LOVE HIM*



APPENDIX:  
CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF UNTO  
THEM THAT LOVE HIM

*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

We read, “And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luk 4:22). Never did such gracious and sweet words drop from the lips of any man that ever lived, as those from the lips of Christ when He was here upon the earth. And of all Christ's words, those that He spoke to His disciples in His last sermon, before His last suffering, in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> chapters of John, are superlatively sweet; and none more sweet in this sermon than the words of my text read unto you: “And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

In the former part of the verse, we have the character of one that truly loves Christ: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” In the latter part of the verse, which is my text, we have the privilege of one that truly loves Christ, and that is in three promises that Christ makes unto him: 1) “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father,” 2) “And I will love him,” 3) “And will manifest myself unto him.” It is the last of these promises that I shall speak unto by way of appendix unto my treatise of the love that true Christians have and ought to have unto Christ, and that is the promise of Christ's manifesting Himself unto such as love Him. And the doctrine is this:

*Doctrine: That Christ will manifest Himself unto such as love Him.*

In handling of this point, I shall show,

1. What it is for Christ to manifest Himself,
2. That Christ will manifest Himself to them that love Him,
3. How Christ manifests Himself unto such,
4. When Christ manifests Himself unto such,
5. Where Christ manifests Himself unto such as love Him,



6. And lastly, make some application.  
Now, what is it for Christ to manifest Himself?

## **1. Christ Manifests Himself**

### ***a. Clearer discovery of His excellence***

Christ manifests Himself when He makes a clearer discovery unto His disciples of the excellency of His person, when He further unveils Himself and lets forth some beams and rays with greater luster and brightness—to discover more of the oriency<sup>1</sup> and transcendency of His soul-ravishing beauty unto them, which they had but a dimmer sight and darker apprehensions of before. This is done when Christ more fully imparts of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation unto them. Upon this account, the apostle prayed in behalf of the believing Ephesians that the Lord would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to enlighten their understandings in the knowledge of Him (Eph 1:16-18). They had the Spirit before and some knowledge of Christ before, but he prays that God would give them fuller measures of the Spirit to make a clearer discovery of Christ, that the eyes of their understandings might be more and more enlightened unto a more spiritual discerning of the surpassing beauty and excellency in Christ's person, in the knowledge of Whom the most enlightened Christians are capable of further growth unto the end of their life—hence that exhortation of the apostle Peter, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2Pe 3:18).

### ***b. Deep impression of His presence***

Christ manifests Himself when He makes a deep impression, and gives a sweet sense, to His disciples of His presence. Christ is never really absent from such as love Him, but He may seem to be so sometimes. They may apprehend Him to be afar off; He may and often does withdraw the sense of His presence: “I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone” (Song 5:6). Christ manifests Himself when He draws near to His people and makes them feel that He is near, giving them a sweet sense of His presence through the powerful breathings of His Spirit upon them, whereby their hearts are quickened, enlarged, and drawn forth towards Himself, and their graces excited unto powerful exercise.

### ***c. Discovery of His love***

Chiefly Christ manifests Himself when He makes discovery of His love unto them that love Him; when He gives them to see not only the beauty of His face, but also the smiles of His face; when He gives them to behold the amiableness of

---

<sup>1</sup> **oriency** – shining brightness; radiance.

His countenance, and lifts up upon them the light of His countenance; when He sheds abroad the sense of His love into their hearts, giving them a full persuasion of His special love unto them and also a sweet sense thereof. Thus, Christ sometimes looks kindly and speaks kindly unto His people.

This sweet language is not spoken to the ear of the body, but inwardly by His Spirit to their souls, when He says to the soul, "I am thy salvation and thy Savior. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and My love is unchangeable. The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My loving-kindness shall never depart and be removed from thee. I have given Myself for thee, and I have given Myself unto thee, and I will never repent of this gift. I have chosen thee for Myself, called and joined thee unto Myself, and I will never repent of this choice, nor suffer thee to be disjoined from Me forever. I have thee upon My heart and keep thee in My hand, and no powers of earth or hell shall be able to pluck thee thence. I have given thee My grace, and I will show thee My glory. Ere long I will appear in the world and receive thee to Myself, that where I am there thou may be also. Dry up, then, thy tears, clear up thy countenance, banish thy fears, droop no longer, despond no more; but be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven thee, thy name is written in My book, which none can blot out. Thou hast a true love for me, and my Father Himself loves thee, and I love thee with a most endeared love. Therefore, do not question or doubt of My love anymore." Thus Christ manifests Himself and His love sometimes unto drooping, desponding souls.

## **2. Christ's Love; Christ's Word**

That Christ will manifest Himself unto them that love Him appears in that His love engages Him, and His Word engages Him, hereunto.

*The love of Christ* is like fire that cannot conceal itself long, and no fire is so strong and has such a vehement flame as the love of Christ to His people. Joseph had a great love to his brethren, notwithstanding all their unkindness. Although he concealed himself for a while and spoke roughly unto them, yet after they were sensible of their fault and were filled with perplexing fears, he could conceal himself no longer from them: "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him...he wept aloud: and...said unto his brethren, I am Joseph...And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me...I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt" (Gen 45:1-4). So Christ may conceal Himself for a while from His people, whatever love He has to them and whatever they have to Him. Some unkindnesses they have shown may be the cause of this hiding; but when they are sensible of their fault, full of grief and perplexity for their offences, His love will not permit Him to hide Himself much longer. His love will engage Him to manifest and discover Himself, and say, "I am Jesus your Savior. Come

near Me, My brethren. Come near Me that you may have a clearer view of Me, that ye may know Me and know that I do love you.”

*The Word of Christ* also engages Him to manifest Himself unto them that love Him. It is Christ's promise here in the text, “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and *will manifest* myself to him.” Christ's Word is sure; true and faithful is Christ's name. The ordinances of the heavens may sooner fail than Christ fail of His Word and promise.

### 3. How Christ Manifests Himself

How does Christ manifest Himself unto them that love Him?

#### a. *In part*

Christ here in this world manifests Himself but in part and darkly. The soul is not now capable of the fullest and clearest manifestation of Christ. This is a happiness reserved for the other world, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1Jo 3:2). “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me” (Joh 17:24). It is hereafter that Christ's disciples shall be perfectly like unto Christ, and shall have a perfect manifestation of Christ—that they shall see Him as He is. It is hereafter that they shall behold His glory. The luster and brightness of Christ's glory is so great that, should He now let forth the beams thereof upon them, it would dazzle and amaze them. It would strike them blind; yea, it would strike them dead!

There is need, because of their weakness, that Christ should keep a veil on His face when He makes discovery of Himself. They cannot now bear the full manifestation of Christ; therefore, Christ discovers Himself but in part. As the Queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's wisdom and prosperity, “It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard” (1Ki 10:6-7). It is not the one half that Christ's disciples now hear or can discern of their Master's excellencies. It has not now entered into their hearts to conceive what beauties, glories, and most admirable perfections there are hid in their Beloved.

Not only Christ's love, but also Christ's loveliness passes their knowledge. There are such dimensions of most wonderful glory in Christ's person, as do infinitely transcend the capacity of the most elevated minds fully to comprehend. Christ manifests Himself truly to them that love Him, yet it is but partly, and that

but a little part; it is but darkly by the beams of a more obscure light. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 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. 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” (1Co 13:9-12).

We ministers prophesy<sup>2</sup> but in part; we can tell you but a little of what there really is in Christ. And both we and you know but in part; our conceptions of Christ's excellencies and our expressions now are childish. Hereafter, there will be a perfect manifestation of Christ, and then all imperfections of knowledge will be removed. Now you may see Christ, but it is through a glass darkly; hereafter face to face. Indeed, it is said, “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed,” etc. (2Co 3:18). There is a comparatively open discovery of Christ now in gospel-times, over what there was under the Law; the veil of types<sup>3</sup> and figures, which covered and in a great measure hid Christ from view, is now removed. Our face is now open from that veil, but Christ's face is not fully open. There is glass still between our eye and Christ's face—the glass of ordinances that, though it helps us to see Him, yet it keeps us from the clearest discovery of Him. We see but through a glass darkly. Our eyes now need this glass to help our weakness, and that we may see what we do see. There is a time coming when we shall be above the need and use of the ordinance glasses; I mean, when we shall see Christ face to face, and know Him in heaven as we are known by Him.

### ***b. Gradually***

Christ now manifests Himself gradually unto them that love Him. Christ does not show at once and altogether what He means to discover of Himself and of His love, but He does it by degrees, a little at one time, and a little at another time; a little in this ordinance, and a little in that. Now He lets down some comfortable beams of the light of His countenance into the soul; by and by clouds do arise and obscure this light, and darkness is upon the spirit. Sometimes Christ opens the curtain and looks upon the soul, gives gracious smiles; by and by the curtain is drawn and His face is hid. Now He appears, and then He disappears. He manifests Himself at one time, withdraws Himself at another time, and so leads His people on from one discovery of Himself unto another—until He brings them at last unto the full discovery of Himself in glory.

---

<sup>2</sup> **prophesy** – preach.

<sup>3</sup> **types** – symbols representing something or someone with similar characteristics; used in the Old Testament to portray New Testament truths.

### *c. Sweetly*

Christ manifests Himself most sweetly unto them that love Him, especially after long absence. When the soul has been seeking and cannot find Him—wandering in the wilderness under amazing fears, perplexing doubts, doleful dependencies, sinking and heart-overwhelming grief—after a black night of deep desertion, oh, how sweet is the day-spring from on high! Oh, how comfortable are the bright beams of the morning light, when He shines upon their dark, despised, and sorrowful spirits, giving them to know assuredly that they are the dearly beloved of His soul, that He has not forgotten them, that He will not forsake them, that He has a more tender love unto them than the mother to her sucking child! Oh, the ravishments of spirit! Oh, the transports of soul that do arise from hence! Oh, the songs that are then in their mouths! This is our Beloved; we have waited for Him! This is our dear Redeemer; we have trusted in Him! Tongue cannot express the delight, the joy and gladness of heart, that arises from the manifestation of Christ's presence and love—the joy of harvest, the joy of the bridegroom on the wedding day, the joy of victory and taking great spoils from an enemy, the joy of a poor man in finding great treasures. The greatest delight that ever was found in the sweetest sensual enjoyment is not worthy to be compared with the joys and exaltings of heart in the manifestation of Christ unto the soul.

## **4. When Christ Manifests Himself**

When does Christ manifest Himself unto them that love Him?

*a. Sometimes Christ quickly* manifests Himself, after a little seeking. Some young converts have early and soon discoveries of Christ and His love. They are cast down for a little while, and Christ soon comes unto them and lifts them up again. Weeping endures but for a night, and that a short summer night; and joy comes early in the morning (Psa 30:5). They have the spirit of bondage, which awakens them to fear; by and by the Spirit of adoption graciously visits them (Rom 8:15)—and makes discovery of their relation to the Father, the love of their Savior, and sheds abroad the sense of His love into their hearts (Rom 5:5).

*b. Sometimes Christ is long* before He manifests Himself. It is long before some do seek Christ, and it is long before such do find Him. Christ waits long to be gracious unto them (Isa 30:18), and Christ often makes them wait long before He manifests to them His loving-kindnesses. Yea, sometimes early seekers are not early finders. Christ makes some wait a long time to try their faith and patience, their love and obedience, and that [so] He may prepare them for more than ordinary comforts and sweetness, which He intends to give in the discovery of Himself unto them.

c. *Sometimes Christ suddenly* manifests Himself unto them that love Him. “Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib” (Song 6:12); or ever they are aware, they see the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof (2Ki 2:12; 13:14), and the Lord Jesus comes unto them in the chariots of salvation with such glory and luster as transports and amazes them. Some Christians that truly love Christ have sought Him in *this* ordinance, and have not found Him; and they have sought Christ in *that* ordinance, and have not found Him. They have been looking and waiting and hoping that at *this* time Christ would discover Himself, or at *that* time He would discover Himself—and still He has hidden Himself, still they have come off with disappointment. This has been their grief; this they have complained of before God. And they have been under fears, lest they should never see Him, never meet with Him at all. Hereupon their spirits have been ready to fail and sink within them, and in discouragement they have been ready to say or think that all their labor would be in vain. And yet, they have resolved to seek Him to their death, and though He should kill them, to put their trust in Him.

And behold, on a sudden, when they have had the least expectation, and their hope has been ready to give up the ghost, they have met with Christ and found Him Whom their soul loves. On a sudden the veil of the Temple has been rent, and they have seen their Beloved in the Holy of Holies. On a sudden the clouds have fled, their darkness has passed away, and the light has shined; the north wind of trouble has ceased and the sweet southern gales have blown upon them. I mean, they have been under such shinings and breathings of the Spirit, that they have seen and felt the presence of Christ—and such a sweet sense of His love as has filled them with soul-ravishing joy.

d. *Christ manifests Himself seasonably* unto them that love Him. Though He does not always manifest Himself when they most desire, yet He manifests Himself when they have most need. And, then, they have most need when they are most low: when they are most low in their spirits, most poor and mean<sup>4</sup> in their own esteem, as well as most low in their condition through affliction and trouble. Humility and patience under affliction makes way for the experience of Christ's manifestation. Christ many times reserves His cordials for the fainting fits, and the sweetest consolations in the discoveries of His love for the time of the greatest adversity. Especially when the trouble is for His sake, He is graciously present. John had his visions when he was banished for the sake of Christ unto the isle Patmos. And when all men forsook Paul at his answer before Nero, then the Lord came to him, stood by him, and strengthened him.

---

<sup>4</sup> **mean** – low; unadorned.

## 5. Where Christ Manifests Himself

Where does Christ manifest Himself unto them that love Him? This is in the way of His ordinances: there He does walk; there He does appear unto His people. Sometimes Christ manifests Himself in the way of *private* ordinances: when they seek Him in their families or in their closets; when they speak of Him in conference; or when they think of Him in their meditation and contemplation. Sometimes Christ manifests Himself unto them that love Him in the way of *public* ordinances: in public prayer or fasting, in hearing of the Word, or when they are feasting at His table.

Especially in this last mentioned ordinance, Christ frequently manifests Himself unto His disciples most sweetly—at the Lord's Table, the Lord appears. In breaking of bread, He discovers Himself (as to the disciples that went to Emmaus, Luk 24:30-31); in His banqueting-house He gives them to feast on His love. There are many who can say by experience that, if ever they met with Christ in their lives and in any ordinance, they have met with Him at the sacrament.<sup>5</sup> There He has unveiled His face; there He has revealed His love. There He has breathed upon them by His Spirit; there they have found and felt the Lord to be near.

## 6. Use 1: To Those Who Have No Love to Christ

I come now to the application. Here, that I may give to everyone his portion, I shall speak 1) To you that have no love unto Christ; 2) To you that have some love to Christ, but are without these manifestations; 3) To you that both love Christ and have manifestations of His love unto you.

The first use concerns such as have no love at all unto Christ. Christ will manifest Himself unto them that love Him. This is children's bread and does not belong to you, because you do not belong unto Christ. This is a choice and most rich privilege, but you have nothing to do with it. Avaunt,<sup>6</sup> all ye profane ones, all ye unclean ones, all ye ungodly ones, all unbelievers whatsoever, who, being without faith, are also without love to Christ: see that you come not near to lay your unclean hands upon this most excellent promise! Never look for any dis-

---

<sup>5</sup> **sacrament** – A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers. (*The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 92). Many Protestants today use the word “ordinances” instead of “sacraments” to distinguish from the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible teaches there are two ordinances instituted by Christ in the New Testament: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

<sup>6</sup> **Avaunt** – Be gone.

covery of Christ's love unto you while you go on in ways of sin, while you are in your natural estate.

I believe some of you may be ready to say, "What if Christ does not manifest Himself unto us? Let us have our honors and dignity, let us have our wealth and plenty, let us have our friends and delights, and let who will look after those airy and fanciful satisfactions in Christ's manifestations." Sinners, is this your language either of tongue or heart? Let me tell you: one day you will sing another tune; you will be of another mind. One day you will acknowledge that all the happiness which you so eagerly pursued in the sweetest creature-enjoyments was but a fancy; that it was thin, light, and airy; that it was vain and empty—when all is fled away and left nothing behind but stings and bitter grief; but inward wounds, gripes,<sup>7</sup> and dreads; upon the sight of approaching death, and under apprehensions of approaching wrath and eternal torments in hell. Then what would you give for an interest in Jesus Christ and a well-grounded persuasion of His special love unto your souls? Then the manifestations of Christ will appear to be no airy thing. Nothing besides this can rationally support your souls when you come to the borders of the grave and to the confines of eternity.

And let me further tell you that have no love to Christ, that although Christ, while you are such, will never manifest Himself unto you in a way of love, yet there is a Day coming when He will manifest Himself unto you; but this manifestation will be with a *vengeance*. It will be in a way of most furious anger. I mean, at the last Day of Judgement, when Christ will be revealed from heaven not only to those that love Him, but also to those that hate Him—for every eye shall then see Him. He will come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon you that have not obeyed this gospel precept to love Him. The consideration of this should awaken you to fear and fly from sin, which otherwise will be your ruin and eternal perdition.

Oh, that you would be persuaded to apply yourselves unto the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, that you may hereby have interest in Him and in the great salvation which He has purchased for you, and which in the gospel is freely tendered unto you! This faith in Christ would work love to Christ, and put you in a capacity of these manifestations of Christ's love unto your souls.

## **7. Use 2: To Those Who Have Some Love to Christ**

The second use concerns such of you as have some love unto Christ, but are without these manifestations. There are two sorts of such: a) Some of you never

---

<sup>7</sup> gripes – pains.



had these manifestations; b) Some of you have had these manifestations, but have lost them.

***a. Never had these manifestations***

Some of you never had these manifestations of Christ's love. It may be you are young and raw Christians. A little while ago you were forward scholars in the school of the devil and served divers lusts with all your might and strength. The Lord has lately hedged up your way with thorns, has opened your eyes to see your sins, and made you sensible of your danger—but as yet your eyes are not open as to any comfortable sight of your Savior. Indeed, Christ has been revealed unto you as able and willing to save you, and you have been drawn by the Word and Spirit to take hold on Him, and to give up yourselves unto Him—but as yet you are in the dark as to your spiritual estate.

You are under doubts and fears of unsoundness and rottenness at heart that you are hypocrites, and shall fall away as other professors like yourselves have done. You fear you shall one day perish by the hand of Saul,<sup>8</sup> that the devil and your own lusts will be too hard for you, and prevail so far with you as to pull you back into ways of sin, and thereby to pull you down into the bottomless pit of hell.

This causes a dread upon your spirits, and fearful apprehensions of God's wrath and future vengeance. This fetches many a sad and heavy sigh from your breasts, many a brinish tear from your eyes. You are troubled, bowed down greatly, and go mourning all the day.

Yet, you are resolved to give your attendance still unto ordinances, and there to wait upon the Lord and for the Lord. You are resolved, notwithstanding all discouragements, that you will be the Lord's, though you know not whether He be yours. You are resolved that Christ shall have your hearts, and you will venture your souls upon Him, though you know not whether you are accepted by Him.

This may be a use of encouragement unto you. Certainly you are such as love Christ and are beloved by Christ, and Christ will manifest Himself unto such as have such love. Let me tell you that Christ is not far from you, whatever you may apprehend. Though He be out of your sight, yet you are not out of His. His eye is upon you and His heart is towards you. He hears all your sighs, He sees all your tears, He pities you and sympathizes with you in all your griefs. He loves you and ere long will let you know it. He is now preparing you for sweet discoveries of Himself, and ere long He will give you those discoveries. If you follow on to seek Him, He will certainly and may suddenly be found of you.

---

<sup>8</sup> **Saul** – first king of Israel, who became jealous of God's favor on young David and continually tried to kill him.

And who knows but this may be the time of Christ's manifesting His love? It may be while you are reading this discourse, you may have a glimpse of His face, and hear His voice saying unto you, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mat 9:2). Lift up the hands that hang down; lift up the heart that is cast down. Look up, then, dejected soul, thy Savior is before thee; open thine eyes and look. Look with the eye of faith: can you not see a marvelous beauty in His countenance? Do you not perceive some smiles in His face, some smiles upon your soul? Do you not feel His Spirit sweetly breathing upon your heart, persuading you and giving you a sweet sense of Christ's peculiar love unto you? Do you not perceive some inward knockings at the door of your heart, and hear some inward callings: "Open to me, and I will come in and sup with thee" (Song 5:2). This is the voice of your Beloved; make haste and open to Him. Open all the faculties of your soul; lift up the everlasting gates to this King of Glory (Psa 24:7). Send forth the handmaids of your desires to invite the Lord in. Let your faith take hold on Him and usher Him into your soul, and then embrace Him in the arms of your dearest love and give Him such entertainment that He may abide with you forever.

***b. Lost these manifestations***

There are others of you that have had some manifestations of Christ unto you formerly, but you have lost them. Your Beloved has withdrawn Himself and is gone: you call and He gives no answer; you seek Him but you cannot find Him.

*1). A contrast*

Time has been when your Lord was present and gave you gracious visits frequently. Many a secret smile you have seen in His face, many a comfortable word you have had from His mouth, many a love-token you have received at His hand. Time has been when you had your evidences written out fair and clean with the seal of the Spirit set unto them, and how exceedingly did you then rejoice in the sense of Christ's love? How did you feast yourselves upon His rich entertainment of gospel privileges, which through Him you were invested with? And oh, the admirings that then you had of free grace! Oh, the sweet meltings of heart in the kindly sense of sin! Oh, the enlargements of desire that you had in your prayers! Oh, the burnings of love to Christ that you have often felt in your bosoms! Oh, the lively hopes that you had, and ineffable delight in hope of the glory of God!

But now there is a strange decay within you of grace, and alteration—as if you were not the same men and women as you were before. You have withdrawn yourselves from Christ, and He has withdrawn Himself from your souls. You have let down your watch, and the devil has got advantage against you by his devices.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> See *Satan Considering the Saints* by Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

He has watched his opportunity and entangled you in the snares of some sins, while you have heedlessly gone to the utmost confines of duty and been upon the borders of sin.

### 2). *Deception*

The devil has sent forth a squadron of temptations—not with fiery darts, but with silken cords—which have treated and parleyed with you to entice and persuade to go a little further. They have told you what pleasant fruit grows within those borders most sweet and delicious to the taste; that there are silver and golden mines which you might quickly dig up and find precious substance; that there you might have honor and esteem—and would you turn your back upon all these? Would you be so nice<sup>10</sup> and strict as not to dispense with a little duty, as not to step over the hedge a little way where the delights and advantage would be so great.

And if you have hesitated, they have told you that it was very disputable whether the confines of duty did not reach beyond the place that they would bring you unto, propounding the example of others of the same religious profession that have frequently gone so far—and why should you scruple.<sup>11</sup> Or, if it were a transgression, it was but a little transgression: they would not desire you to go far, and who is there that lives and does not transgress those bounds? And, you might easily repent and find mercy if God were offended; you might quickly retire and return into your former limits. Then, while you have been parleying with temptations, the silken cords have been fastened about you, and ere you have been aware you have been drawn along, partly willing and partly unwilling, and enticed unto some kind of sins and complied with some kind of lusts, indulging yourselves to give them satisfaction—whereby you have been beguiled and befooled, whereby you have been secretly wounded and inwardly defiled (Jam 1:14-15).

### 3). *Your plight*

And thus your evidences for heaven have been miserably blotted, so that now you are not able to read them. Time has been when worldly affections seemed to be mortified within you, to be dead and buried. Many a sore thrust and wound you had given unto them, and how did they bleed and faint, and grew so weak that they seemed to be giving up the ghost. You have thought surely they would never stir much in you anymore. Then your love to Christ was strong and active; it did burn and flame within you. Oh, the zeal that you then had for your Master's honor. You seemed to have no interest to carry on in the world but the interest of

---

<sup>10</sup> **nice** – accurate; precise.

<sup>11</sup> **scruple** – hesitate.

Christ. You minded not your own things upon your own account, but all your interests were swallowed up in the interest of Jesus Christ—which you chiefly minded and cared for, and made everything else to buckle under it and to be subservient unto it.

But now your affections to Christ are strangely cooled. If there be the fire of love to Christ still within you, it is not fire in burning coals or in a vehement flame; but it is a fire in a few scattered sparks, and those raked over that they give neither light nor heat, and are hardly, if at all, discernable by you. And your worldly affections, which seemed to be dead, they have gotten spirit, life, vigor, and strength. Oh, the eager desire that you [now] have after the world and the things in the world, and these accompanied with eager prosecution<sup>12</sup> of the world. Now the world has your thoughts in contrivements<sup>13</sup> about it, and the world has your tongues in your most frequent discourse of it. Now the world has your hand and your time; but that which is worst of all, the world has your heart, too. The world has jostled Christ off of His throne and, for the present, usurps His seat.

Is it then a wonder if your Beloved be offended that you should thus decline in your love, that your hearts should go a whoring from Him unto the creature, in your giving those affections unto anything in the world that is His due? Hence it is that Christ has shut up His countenance from you; or, if He looks, it is with frowns upon you. You have lost your first love (Rev 2:4), and you have lost your first sights and tastes of the love of Christ. Now your spiritual joys and comforts are fled out of sight. They are lost and gone, and only the bare remembrance of them remains. Whatever delights you have, they are only such as come in at the door of sense. You have none at all that come in at the door of faith, and your sensual delights have expelled and banished your spiritual. Now the rich gospel-privileges have not that savor and sweet relish with you as heretofore. Your minding and savoring so much the earth and earthly things has disrelished your spiritual appetite.

Oh, the mischief that indulged sin has done unto you! Oh, the unfelt wounds—but so much the more deep and dangerous—that sin has given you! Oh, the defilements of sin in your consciences, and the stains and blots that sin has cast upon your profession! Oh, the havoc that sin has made among your graces and among your comforts! Leaves you have still of an outward profession, but where is your fruit to be found (Mat 13:23)? If you have some fruit, is it not withered fruit, sour and ill-relished; not such ripe, mellow, and sweet fruit as heretofore in your flourishing estate? Surely the Lord is at a great distance from such of you, and are there not too many such amongst you?

---

<sup>12</sup> **prosecution** – pursuit.

<sup>13</sup> **contrivements** – plots; schemes.

And what need have you to remember to where you are fallen, to ransack your hearts to find out your sins, to humble yourselves deeply, to repent, grieve, and mourn; to turn your laughter into weeping and your joy into heaviness; and to return unto the Lord speedily and do your first works. Otherwise some fearful judgments are like to befall you, and the Lord may be even forced to awaken you with a vengeance, and make you a terror unto yourselves and unto all about you. Don't provoke the Lord, by your thus running away from Him, to follow you with a storm as He did Jonah, and to devour you in the floods and waves of dreadful afflictions—[so] that hereby He may reduce, restore, and keep you from being drowned in utter perdition and eternal destruction.

#### 4). *Chastening*

It may be the Lord has scourged some of you for your faults with the rods of some crosses and disappointments, some outward losses and troubles. It may be He has put bitterness upon those breasts that you have been sucking, and mingled gall in the cup of your pleasures that you have been drinking; and you have begun to think of your evil ways and seen what an evil thing and bitter it is to backslide from the Lord; and you have thought it was best with you when you were nearest unto Christ.

It may be God has dealt with you as He tells His backsliding people He would do with them: "Behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths: And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them, but she shall not find them; Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now" (Hos 2:6-7). And now you are seeking after your Beloved, but He has withdrawn Himself from you and seems to take no notice of you. You call, cry, sigh, weep, lament, complain, seek, and wait—and yet He withholds from you all special discoveries of His love. Possibly, doubts may hence arise and fears grow upon your spirits; and you are ready to sink, and sometimes are almost overwhelmed with inward trouble.

Let this doctrine be an encouragement to you still to seek diligently and wait patiently; for the Lord will manifest Himself again unto you in His own time, which is the best time. He may try you for a while whether you will follow Him in the dark. He may suffer you to wait some time for Him, who have made Him to wait so long time for you. But if you persevere to seek Him diligently in His ways, you shall find that it will not be in vain.

And what would you say, you backsliding souls, if the Lord should manifest Himself unto you at this time? Would you not abuse His kindness? If He should

discover His love to you again, would you not grow wanton<sup>14</sup> and carnally secure? If He should now renew your evidences and give them [to be] fair written and easier to be read by you, would you not blot them again by your sins? If He should now speak peace unto your consciences, would you not again return unto folly? If He should now restore unto you the joys of His salvation and send down the Holy Ghost from heaven to come unto you, to be your Comforter and to dwell with you, would you not grieve and quench the Spirit, and provoke Him to another retirement and more dreadful withdrawings than before? It may be the Lord will try you.

*5). Your plea*

It may be the Lord may draw near and make some discovery of Himself, and discovery of His love, unto you. It may be the Lord may look kindly now upon you, and secretly by His Spirit speak kindly unto you. You are now looking and longing, and hoping and waiting; possibly this may be the time of your seeing His face and the smiles that are there, of your feeling the sweet sheddings abroad of His love into your hearts by His Spirit. At least, He may give you a glimpse, a glance, a little taste, such as shall ravish your hearts. However, wait for Him; and with earnest desires and importunate requests, plead with Him for His returns and these manifestations, and that in such kind of language as this:

“Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly. Make haste, O my Beloved, make haste to my soul that thirsts for Thee, as the parched land after the sweet showers that fall from heaven, as the hunted hart after the cooling and refreshing streams of the water brooks. Oh, when shall I drink of those waters of life that Thou hast to give, Who art the fountain and spring from whence they flow? When shall I taste again how good Thou art? When shall I see Thee again, and feed and feast my soul again with Thy love? When, Lord, oh, when wilt Thou come unto me? Wilt Thou cast off forever? Wilt Thou be favorable no more (Psa 77:7)? Hast Thou in anger shut up Thy bowels? Shall this cloud always sit upon Thy brow? Shall this curtain always be drawn before Thy face?

“Truth, Lord, I have grievously sinned and greatly offended Thee; but have I not, do I not, truly repent? Is there anything in the world so grievous unto me as the remembrance of my miscarriages? I acknowledge my offence, my folly, and horrid ingratitude; but shall my sins be always a wall of separation between me and my Beloved? Are not Thy bowels tender? Are not thy mercies plentiful? Is there not forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared and the more dearly beloved? Dost Thou not forgive freely without upbraiding?

---

<sup>14</sup> **wanton** – dissolute; sensual.

“Hast Thou not promised to be found of all them that diligently seek Thee? And didst Thou ever fail in Thy word unto any? And shall I be the first? Are not the desires of my soul after Thee, and that chiefly, and that earnestly? Is there not dearth and drought in all things beneath Thyself, nothing that can give me satisfaction? Have I not renounced the world for my portion? Thou mightest send me to the world for help and comfort, to the world that I have over-earnestly desired and loved, and over-eagerly sought for contentment and happiness in. But is this Thy wont<sup>15</sup> and Thy way, and the manner of Thy dealing with them that are grieved for their sin and ashamed of their folly?

“Hast thou not promised to manifest Thyself unto them that love Thee? And do not I love Thee? Dost not Thou, Who knowest all things, know that I love Thee? Though my love be imperfect, yet is it not true? Though it be weak, yet is it not sincere? Else, whence are these desires after Thee above all persons and things in the world? Are not these the product of true love? And wilt Thou not make good Thy promise then, to manifest Thyself unto me?

“And if I had the manifestations of Thy love, would not my love grow and increase hereby? Should I not love the more dearly and strongly, if I had clear discoveries and were persuaded assuredly of Thy love unto me? Truth, Lord: I am altogether unworthy of such a favor, but didst Thou ever bestow this favor upon any for their deserts? Are not all Thy gifts free? And am not I as capable as any of free grace? The more unworthy, the more I shall admire thee; the more is forgiven, I shall love the more. And may I not now have a taste of Thy loving kindness? Hasten, my Beloved, oh, hasten unto me, and be as a roe upon the mountains of spices (Song 8:14)! Do not veil Thy face from me any longer. Do not conceal Thy love. But now, oh, now draw near, and make me exceeding glad in the light of Thy countenance and in the beauty of Thy face and smiles thereof.”

#### 6). *Christ's answer*

Such desires and pleadings as these might prevail with the Lord forthwith to return again unto you, and to say: “Well, soul, I have heard thy prayer, thy breathing, and thy cry. Thy pleadings have prevailed with me, and I am now come unto thee. Be it to thee according to thy desires. Come, soul, and look up; lift up thine eyes and see. Here I am: behold Me—Behold Me! This day I am come to bring glad tidings of great joy unto thee. I assure thee that I am thine, and all Mine is thine. And thou art Mine, and shalt be Mine forever.”

And what words can sound so sweet and yield such comfort, as these or such like, spoken by the Spirit unto the hearts of those from whom Christ is withdrawn?

---

<sup>15</sup> **wont** – custom.

## 8. Use 3: To Those with Manifestations of Christ's Love

The third use concerns you that do love Christ and have the manifestations of His love to your souls. Three things be exhorted unto: a) Rejoice in the Lord; b) Admire His free grace; c) Labor to retain these manifestations.

### a. *Rejoice in the Lord*

#### 1). *United to Christ with manifestations of His love*

You that have the manifestations of the love of Christ: rejoice in the Lord. Of all persons in the world, you have most reason to rejoice: you are the happiest men and women alive. It is not *wealth* in the greatest abundance that can make men happy; the richest persons often have thorns of the greatest discontent to pierce their hearts, and stings of the greatest guilt to wound their consciences. It is not the highest *honor* and worldly dignity that can make men happy; the vilest men are often exalted, and those that are in the highest places are in the most slippery places, from whence they are soon cast down into destruction. Whatever security they have in life, yet they are usually consumed utterly with terrors when grim death appears and summons them to depart. It is not the sweetest *sensual delight* that can make men happy; vanity is the attendant, and vexation of spirit is the consequent, of all those pleasures that are sensual and sinful, that are the seed also of pain and everlasting torment.

Such only can be said to be happy in truth as are really united and related unto Jesus Christ, and through Him reconciled unto God and entitled unto the kingdom of heaven. But you are the *most* happy, and have reason to take the most comfort, who have not only relation unto Christ, but also the manifestations of Him; who know that Christ is yours and you are His, that Christ loves you, and that His love, as it had no beginning, so it is without changing and will know no ending. If you know that Christ loves you, you have reason to rejoice, because hereby you may know assuredly that you are *elected*: that God by an eternal and unchangeable decree<sup>16</sup> has chosen you, when He has chosen so few of fallen men and none of the fallen angels, and when there was not the least foreseen motive to induce Him hereunto. The assurance of this may yield inexpressible sweetness unto you.

#### 2). *Union, justification, adoption*

If you know that Christ loves you, you may know assuredly your effectual calling, conversion, and wonderful *union* unto Christ. Oh, what matter of joy is it to think how God has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light!—how He has delivered you out of the snare of the devil and the bonds of your own lusts,

---

<sup>16</sup> See Free Grace Broadcaster 237, *God's Decrees*; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



and set your souls at liberty!—how He has wrought a miracle in your first resurrection from the grave and spiritual death of sin, and put forth the same power in your new creation and change of your natures, as in His first creation of the world!—how He has dissolved and made a divorce between your hearts and your sins, and so wonderfully united and espoused you unto the Lord Jesus, and by this conjunction and relation given you an interest in all the privileges that Christ has purchased.

If you know that Christ loves you, you may know assuredly that you are *justified* through His merits and mediation; and, oh, what matter of joy is this, to think that all your sins, original and actual, are pardoned; that none can lay any sin to your charge, because God has justified you!—that there is none that shall condemn you, because Christ has loved you, and out of love has died for you and is now making intercession for you at the right hand of God (Rom 8:33-34)—to be acquitted from all guilt, and no more liable unto future wrath than if you had never offended—and when you had no righteousness of your own, to be accepted as perfectly righteous in the sight of God, through the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness! Who has reason to rejoice, if you have not reason?

If you know that Christ loves you, you may assuredly say that you are the *sons and daughters* of the Lord Almighty. And will you not rejoice when—of children of the devil, children of disobedience, children of wrath—you are made the children of God, the glorious Jehovah, Who is the supreme sovereign and king of the whole world; and when you have not an empty name only, but are instituted to all the privileges of His children?

### 3). *Preservation*

If you know that Christ loves you, you may know assuredly that He will *keep alive* His interest in you, preserve His grace in your hearts, and enable you to persevere in faith and holiness—notwithstanding all the alluring temptations that you may meet with in the world, notwithstanding all the suggestions and oppositions of Satan, and notwithstanding all the powerful workings of your remaining lusts and corruptions; all which do combine together and use all their power and policy (which is great) to extirpate<sup>17</sup> your grace, to draw you unto sin, [and] to entice or force you out of the ways of God.

And, oh, what matter of comfort is it that the Lord Jesus, Who loves you, has undertaken for you to keep you in His hand, and by His unseen but mighty power to enable you to resist and overcome, to hold on in His ways, and hold out unto the end—so that you may triumph with the apostle and say, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine,

---

<sup>17</sup> **extirpate** – totally destroy; pull up by the roots.

or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom 8:35, 37). And you may be persuaded as Paul was, and greatly rejoice therein, 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 8:38-39).

If you know that Christ loves you, you may know assuredly that your *prayers* have audience with God; that whatever imperfections and sinful mixtures they have, yet they are mingled with the sweet incense of Christ's merits, through which they are perfumed and accepted. And what comfort is this, that whatever you ask of the Father in the name of your dear Lord Jesus, if it be for His glory and your good, He will certainly procure it for you (Joh 16:23).

To conclude, if you know that Christ loves you, you may know assuredly that you are heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and that as certainly as you are alive, you shall attain eternal felicity in the beatifical vision and fruition of your Lord. As certainly as you have the first fruits, so certainly shall you have the harvest. As certainly as you have the earnest, so certainly shall you have the inheritance. As certainly as you see Christ by faith here, so certainly shall you have the beatific vision of His person and glory in heaven, and be made perfectly happy in the eternal and full enjoyment of Him. Oh, how should you then rejoice in the Lord, rejoice in His person, rejoice in His love, rejoice in His benefits, rejoice in what you have, and rejoice in what you hope to have by Him. Rejoice in what you see now, feel now, and taste now; and rejoice in the foresights and foretastes of your happiness to come. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice" (Phi 4:4).

### ***b. Admire His grace***

If you have manifestations of Christ's love unto you, admire His free grace in these manifestations, when Christ had promised to manifest Himself unto such as love Him: "Judas saith to him, not Iscariot [he was the traitor and had no true love to his Master, but Judas the brother of James], Lord, how is it that thou wilt *manifest thyself* unto us, and not unto the world?" (Joh 14:22)...

#### *1). Condescension of Christ*

And how should you wonder, then, that the Lord Jesus should manifest Himself unto you! That the Lord Jesus—Whose name is Wonderful (Isa 9:6), and has so many wonders in Him; a person of so great eminency and excellency, Who has such a crown of glory upon His head, such robes of glory upon His back, and on the vesture of His garment and His thigh a name written: King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev 17:14)—that this most excellent person should manifest Himself unto you, such as you, when He conceals Himself from the greatest princes of the

earth, who by their interest, authority, and influence might highly promote His glory. That He should manifest Himself unto you, who for the most part are low and mean, poor and despised in the world. That when He hides Himself from most of the wise and prudent and great scholars in the world, who by their parts and learning might magnify His name and spread His fame, He should manifest Himself unto you, who for the most part are persons of mean parts and education. That when Christ hid Himself from many moralists, who have escaped the grosser pollutions that are in the world, He should reveal and manifest Himself unto you—some of whom before conversion were notoriously guilty of most foul sins. That when Christ manifests Himself unto so few, you should be in the number of those few!

How many wonders are here! That this glorious person should send down another glorious person, I mean the Holy Ghost, from heaven (which is more than if He had sent down all the glorious angels that are in heaven) to make this discovery of Himself unto you. That He should make use of the foolishness of preaching as a means to effect this great thing. That while a man of like passions and infirmities with yourselves is opening and applying the Scriptures, the Lord by this means should unveil Himself and open the treasures of His love unto you. That your humble, fervent, and believing prayers here on earth should ascend up to the throne of God that is in heaven, and move the Lord Jesus that is there to come down thence—though not in person, yet by His Spirit. That prayer should open heaven's gate, and have such a prevalence for this manifestation and discovery of Christ—though the best prayers of the best men are not without mixture of sin. That while you are sitting at the Lord's Table, the Lord Himself should give you a visit; and while you are eating bread and wine at the sacrament, He should give you to see, feel, and taste Himself and His love by your spiritual senses.

It was wonderful humiliation in Christ that, when He could have commanded the most stately horses—yea lions, elephants, or unicorns—He should ride to Jerusalem upon a donkey. And when Christ has the chariots of so many thousand glorious angels—which He could command and ride triumphantly in, when He makes discovery of Himself unto His people—that He should make use of the chariots of so mean ordinances in the discovery of Himself unto you. How many wonders are here! How should you admire His wonderful grace and love, and say, "What is man, that thou art [thus] mindful of him?"—or any of the sons of men, that Thou shouldest thus visit them (Psa 8:4)? What are we but unworthy wretches? And why shouldest Thou manifest Thyself unto us? Even so dear Jesus because it "seemed good in thy sight" (Luk 10:21).

## 2). *Excellency of manifestations*

Especially you have reason to wonder and admire at the manifestations that Christ has given of Himself and love to you, when you consider the *excellency of these manifestations* and discoveries beyond all other discoveries. If you have seen the most rare works of art and human invention, the most curious pictures, the most stately edifices, or any other works of the most ingenious contrivement—if you have viewed the works of nature that do far exceed those of art: the beautiful frame of the heavens over your heads; the glorious luminaries of sun, moon, and stars in their wonderful light and motion; the earth under your feet when it has got on its best attire, when the fields are clothed with grass in the spring or enriched with corn in the summer—if you have seen the most pleasant brooks, streams, and fountains of water, the most stately groves with broad-shadowing trees, the most flourishing orchards, most richly laden with variety of the most delicious fruit, the most delightful gardens with variety of the choicest flowers casting forth the most fragrant smell—if you have seen all sorts of birds and fowls in the air, all sorts of beasts on the earth, all sorts of fish in the sea—if you have seen the most goodly men that ever were born, the fairest women with the most sparkling beauty—what is the sight of all these things, and the most lovely objects that ever were visible to the eye of the body? The sight of all is but mean, contemptible, and not worthy to be named in comparison with the sight of the Lord Jesus by the eye of the soul.

Whatever beauty and loveliness there is to be found in any, or in all visible creatures, there is *infinitely more beauty and loveliness* in Jesus Christ. All visible beauty is but a shadow; in Christ there is substantial beauty. All visible beauty is fading, like the flower that soon withereth, like the leaf that soon fadeth; but in Christ there is permanent beauty. All visible beauty is inferior and mean, yea, deformity, compared with Christ's transcendent loveliness. There is no discovery to the eye of the mind comparable to the discovery of Christ unto the eye of faith. The light of nature, in the greatest improvement of it, is but a weak and dim light in comparison with the spiritual light of the knowledge of Christ. No light [is] so clear and bright, no light so pure and sweet, as that which makes discovery of the Lord Jesus unto the soul.

This discovery of Christ dispels clouds from the mind and exhales lusts from the heart. It brightens the understanding and cleanses the affections. It warms the heart with love and fills the heart with comfort. It quiets the conscience and purifies it. It gives a most sweet peace and tranquility to the spirit, and with it brings in such spiritual joy as is unspeakable and full of glory (1Pe 1:8). Oh, how, then, should you admire the riches of the grace and kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ unto you, that He should give unto you this discovery of Himself, when the

discovery is so admirable, so excellent, so desirable, so useful, and which lifts you up into a far higher degree of excellency than the otherwise most accomplished persons in the world, who are without this discovery!

***c. Labor to retain***

To conclude, if you have these manifestations of Christ and His love unto you, labor to retain these manifestations. In a word, take heed of indulging yourselves in any sins that may provoke Him to depart from you and withdraw the sweet and comfortable influences of His Spirit. Be diligent in the use of all means and ordinances, public, private, and secret, whereby you may maintain daily communion and fellowship with Him.

