

THE EVENING HOUR.

It is the evening hour,
And thankfully,
Father, thy weary child
Has come to thee.

I lean my aching head
Upon thy breast,
And there, and only there,
I am at rest.

Thou knowest all my life,
Each petty sin;
Nothing is hid from thee—
Without, within.

All that I have or am,
Is wholly thine;
So is my soul at peace,
For thou art mine.

To-morrow's dawn may find
Me here or there;
It matters little, since thy love
Is everywhere.

"HE LOVED ME AND HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME."

BY REV. GEO. F. PENTECOST, D. D.

There is little doubt in my mind that the revelation which God has made to men is pivoted upon John iii. 16. The love of God is the source whence flows all his grace to men. That love is not induced by anything that God foresaw in men, or by anything that man has done to promote it. As we have before shown, love is the very essence of the divine nature, in which all his attributes adhere, and from which all his actions proceed. It is the final cause of all things; and especially it is the final cause of man's salvation, so far, at least, as man is concerned. It is as universal as the race. It seems to me little short of blasphemy to say that the love of God in the divine heart is limited to any number of elect sinners, or that when it was incarnated in Christ it was the gift of God to a few and not to all mankind.

In a former article I have endeavored to show something of the wealth of this love; something of the confidence and hope which it inspires in the heart of the man who comes to know the revelation and receives it. But there is with very many persons, who have an anxious desire to be personally included in the operations of this divine love of God, a fear lest in the very universality of it they should lose a sense of its individuality to them on God's part. I have even heard Christians say that they could not understand how God could take knowledge of the individual sinner; that, whilst his love was universal, it was more a love toward the race than toward the individuals of the race. And that the same was true of the expiation which our Lord Jesus Christ made when he laid his life down, a ransom for all. Indeed, we have all felt the force of this difficulty. For ourselves we know that our need is individual, that our sin is individual; and out of this grows a certain anxious desire to know whether we are individual objects of God's love, and whether we are to receive grace and forgiveness, justification and salvation, for our personal sins, or whether we are to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in the general mercy of God for our salvation. No doubt the soul that first comes to know the truth of the Word, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life," has come to know a most blessed truth. It is after this knowledge, however, that the yearning desire for personal relations to God makes itself manifest in the consciousness. The soul says to itself: "No doubt God loves the world, but the world is very large; it comprehends in the past, the present and the future many millions of souls. But does he love me as distinct from every other and all other souls? Christ indeed died for the sins of the whole world, but did he die for my sins? Were my sins in his mind, and was the lost condition of my soul in his heart when on Calvary he offered himself up, a sacrifice unto God? In our own experience we are not conscious of condemnation for the sins of others, but for our own individual sins. Others indeed may be guilty, and others may be as sinful as we; but, after all, it is my sin, and not the sin of the world that burdens my conscience. It is the apprehension of my own existence, my own soul's personality and individuality, that alarms me and fills me with fear and dread at the thought of the future and of the Judgment. There is no comfort to me in the thought of a corporate immortality. There would be little conscience for sin if sin was a corporate matter. So that, indeed, I can never come to a true rest in God, until I know of a truth whether my relations to him through Jesus Christ are individual.

Now I can fancy such thoughts as these burdening the heart and the conscience of the Apostle Paul; and I think when he first found himself standing in the spacious promise contained in John iii. 16, that the sense of his own sin must have led him to look further than that; for something more particular and personal. If I may be allowed to indulge for a moment in fancy, I can imagine him resting his heart for a

little on the word "whosoever," pressing it as he would a secret panel in the walls of a palace, until, bursting open before him, it would lead him into Galatians ii. 20, where we find him exclaiming: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This declaration I believe to be the highest expression of a believer's faith. It brings him face to face with God in Christ Jesus, and so far forth it banishes from his mind and heart, and indeed from the whole universe, every other living creature but himself. As he thus contemplates God, he sees all the wealth of the divine nature lavished upon himself, and all the untold virtue of Christ expended for his redemption; he rejoices, not in a corporate benefit, but in the individual possession of all that Christ is and has done.

There used to be held a theory of the Atonement to the effect that Christ died for the elect, that the virtue of his Atonement was distributed amongst those who were saved, that Christ's sufferings represented the sum total of penalty due on account of the sin of the elect, and that his virtue was divided equally, or according to need amongst those who believed. But this is a most abhorrent thought, and in my judgment infinitely wider of the truth. I once heard a man say in the course of a sermon that "one drop of the blood of Christ was sufficient to save a soul." Of course this was figurative language; but it was a false figure, representing a gross caricature of the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ. Christ is not divided, nor is his love divided, nor is the meritorious worth of his sacrifice divided. The truth is that each sinner is saved by the whole work and merit of Christ; that each believing soul stands before God clothed in the entire righteousness of him who has become our salvation. My thought of Christ and his redemptive work as being the highest expression of God's love to me is something like this: If, instead of being one of an infinite number of sinners, I had been the only one of the descendants of Adam who had departed from the ways of righteousness and fallen into sin, I believe that God's love for me would have led him to send his Son to die for me, and that Jesus Christ would have stepped as quickly from the bosom of the Father to accomplish his mission of humiliation, suffering and death for me as it has led him to do it for the whole race of sinners. My faith takes hold of all there is in the person and the work of Christ; my salvation stands not in a part but in the whole; therefore it is that I have confidence.

There are those who think it is presumption for any believer to affirm without question his salvation, based upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if we are permitted, as surely we are, each one of us to appropriate not a part but the whole of God's love in Christ, then, whatever our sin may be, however black in character, however multiplied in the number of its transgressions, surely it is more than covered by the infinite Christ and the infinite worth of his atoning work. Again and again we say in the joy of our faith: "He loved me and gave himself for me."

In thus appropriating the whole of Christ to himself, the believer by no means denies a similar right to every other believer. There is no selfishness in such a faith as this, because it is the nature of the Divine Love and his saving work, that, while it is manifested to all, each believer appropriates all to himself. If any one doubts the truth of this declaration or hesitates to appropriate all of Christ and his salvation to himself, lest such a thing be not permissible or possible, I would fain clear up such a difficulty as that with so familiar an illustration as this.

I have, for example, in my home three precious children. Now suppose some one should ask me:

"Do you love your children, Mr. P.?"

Of course my reply would be quick and unhesitating: "Certainly I love my children."

"But how much do you love them?"

"Why," I would reply, "with all the love I have. I am not conscious of any division in my love for my children. They have it all. I keep nothing back of love for them."

"Then you love your oldest child?"

"Certainly. When you mention my oldest child to me, my heart goes out to her in love which is unquestioned."

"But how much do you love her?"

"Why," I say, in surprise at such a question. "I love her with all the love I have. There is no consciousness of division in my love when I think of her. She has it all."

"Then do you not love your second child any?"

"Why, certainly, I love my second child as well."

"But how much do you love her?"

"Why," I reply, "with all the love I have. She, indeed, is quite a different child, in character and temperament, from her oldest sister; as different almost as it is possible for one child to differ from another. Nevertheless, I love her equally well. She has all my love. I never look at her—whether in delight at the vivacity of her spirits, or in rebuke and a little sorrowful anxiety at the quickness and impulsiveness of her temperament—but that my whole heart goes out to her, in the gladness of love or its anxiety. She has all my love."

"But then," my inquirer says: "How about the boy? Do you love him?"

"Oh! certainly, I love my boy—the youngest of my children—and he is every inch a boy, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; a boy in whom, like other boys, there is a great mixture of character. There is much in him that gives me anxiety, as well as much that gives me great delight. There are times when my love for him manifests itself in an outcry to God that he may be saved from some tendencies which are manifest, from the dangers that surround him, and the temptations which assail every boy. There are other times when my love has nothing in it but a consciousness of unspeakable gladness and delight. Yes, I love my boy with all the love I have. There is no division of love when I think of him. He has it all."

It may be said, in answer to this: "Here is a strange statement. A man has three children, and says he loves them all with all the love he has; and, in the same breath he says he loves each one of them with all the love he has." But surely this is not a proposition which is difficult for any parent to solve. Fathers and mothers know how they can love their children with all their love, and yet give all to each.

In a much higher degree than this, I rejoice to know and believe that God loves all his children, and loves each with all his love. Who would have it otherwise than this? And, thanks be unto God, it is not otherwise than this. With the apostle John I say: "We have known and believed the love which God hath to us."

It is in this measureless love of God that each one of us is bidden to keep himself. Surely in such a shelter, compassed about with this infinite love of God, there can be no danger, there can be no room for fear, there can be no place for discouragement, there cannot possibly come to the soul thus sheltered anything but the peace of Heaven. But, short of this individual hiding in the infinite measure of God's love, there must always be room for question, for doubt, and for fear. This truth should be carried in the believer's heart and in all his transactions with God. Do we come to him with confession? Do we come to him with need for ourselves? Do we come to him to plead for others? We must base our prayer, we must ground our confession, upon this individual relation and upon the revelation of God's love to us. Suppose one of my children should come to me and say:

"Papa, am I not your child? Am I not one of three? Do you not love me?"

To all of which I would respond heartily and fondly:

"Yes, my child, surely."

"Then, papa, on the basis of my claim to one-third of your love I make this request."

Could I for a moment entertain the request of a child who would come to me and thus divide my love? Would I not rather say to that child:

"Go hence a while until you can have a better thought of your father and a more comprehensive knowledge of his love, for not with one-third, but with all my love, my child, I love you."

If we need confirmation of this blessed truth, we have only to call to mind the great number of scriptures in which God has shown to us how he stands related to every one of his children in this close, personal and individual way. Abraham was his friend; Daniel was his well-beloved; to Paul he came saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" To this one he says "I have chosen thee;" and to that one, "Thou art my servant."

We are to know our relations to God by the revelation which Jesus Christ has made of the relations which existed between himself and his Father. Surely no one would question the truth that when God said: "This my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," nothing short of all the love of God was bestowed upon his Son. Did not our Lord mean to convey to us the thought that we stand related to God, so far as love was concerned, just as he was related to the Father, when he said: "As the Father hath loved me, so hath I loved you, Con-

tinued in my love." And is not the same truth taught in that other word: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine..." as the Father knoweth me." That is, just in the same way and just in the same measure. And is not his high-priestly prayer, recorded in John xvii. just one out-breathing of his soul in prayer that every one of us may be in the Father just as he was in the Father? That we might be one in that same bond of love which bound him and the Father together? How shall we else interpret all these words of our Lord? How else shall we understand, indeed, the salvation which has come to us? Nothing short of such a love is equal to such a salvation.

Oh! the breadth and the length and the depth and height of the love of Christ! Surely it passeth knowledge; and yet the Spirit-inspired prayer of the apostle is that we may be able to comprehend it. Would God that we knew more of it, that we lived more continually in it, that all our lives might be more fully filled with it. Then would the world know that God had sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world, and that such a love as Christians lived in could only come from heaven.—Independent.

A STORY OF TITHES.

Many years ago a lad of sixteen years left home to seek his fortune. All his worldly possessions were tied up in a bundle which he carried in his hand. As he trudged along he met an old neighbor, the captain of a canal boat, and the following conversation took place, which changed the whole current of the boy's life:

"Well, William, where are you going?"

"I don't know," he answered. "Father is too poor to keep me any longer, and says I must now make a living for myself."

"There is no trouble about that," said the captain. "Be sure you start right, and you'll get along finely."

William told his friend that the only trade he knew anything about was soap and candle making, at which he had helped his father while at home.

"Well," said the old man, "let me pray with you and give you a little advice, and then I will let you go."

They both knelt upon the tow-path (the path along which the horses that drew the boat walked). The old man prayed for William, and then this advice was given:

"Someone will soon be the leading soap-maker in New York. It can be you as well as anyone. I hope it may. Be a good man; give your heart to Christ; give the Lord all that belongs to him of every dollar you earn; make an honest soap, give a full pound, and I am certain you will yet be a great, good, and rich man."

When the boy reached the city he found it hard to get work. Lonesome and far from home, he remembered his mother's last words, and the last words of the canal boat captain. He was then and there led to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." He united with the church. He remembered his promise to the old captain. The first dollar he earned brought up the question of the Lord's part. He looked in the Bible and found that the Jews were commanded to give one-tenth, so he said: "If the Lord will take one-tenth, I will give that." And so he did. Ten cents of every dollar was sacred to the Lord.

After a few years both partners died, and William became the sole owner of the business. He now resolved to keep his promise to the old captain; he made an honest soap, gave a full pound, and instructed his book-keeper to open an account with the Lord, and carry one-tenth of all his income to that account. He was prosperous; his business grew; his family was blessed; his soap sold, and he grew rich faster than he had ever hoped. He then decided to give the Lord two-tenths, and he prospered more than ever; then three-tenths, then four-tenths, then five-tenths. He then educated his family, settled all his plans for life, and told the Lord he would give him all his income. He prospered more than ever. This is the true story of a man who has given millions of dollars to the Lord's cause, and left a name that will never die.—Gospel in all Lands.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

In a railway car a man about sixty years old came to sit beside me. He had heard me lecture the evening before on temperance. "I am a master of a ship," said he, "sailing out of New York, and have just returned from my fiftieth voyage across the Atlantic. About thirty years ago I was a sot, shipped while drunk, and was carried on board like a log. When I came to, the captain asked me, 'Do you remember your mother?' I told him she died before I could remember. 'Well,' said he 'I am a Ver-

mont man. When I was young I was crazy to go to sea. At last my mother consented I should seek my fortune. 'My boy, she said, 'I don't know anything about towns, and I never saw the sea, but they tell me they make thousands of drunkards. Now, promise me you'll never drink a drop of liquor.'

"He said: 'I laid my hands in hers and promised, as I looked into her eyes for the last time. She died soon after. I've been on every sea, seen the worst kinds of life and men—they laughed at me as a milkop and wanted to know if I was a coward. But when they offered me liquor I saw my mother's pleading face, and I never drank a drop. It has been my sheet-anchor; I owe it all to that. Would you like to take that pledge?' said he. My companion took it, and he added: 'It has saved me. I have a fine ship, wife and children at home, and I have helped others.'

That earnest mother saved two men to virtue and usefulness; how many more He who sees all can alone tell.—Wendell Phillips.

LIBERALISM PERSONIFIED.

It was announced some years ago that old Bigotry was dead and fairly buried. I am sorry to be under the necessity of informing this audience that it has been discovered of late that he left behind him an only child, a prodigal son, who arrived at man's estate. This son is known by the name of Liberalism. Young Liberalism is the very antipodes of his old father. He is handsome, polite, insinuating, and although somewhat superficial, possesses that polish and tact which impose upon general observers. He speaks all languages, subscribes to all creeds, holds a levee with all sects and parties, is friendly with everybody, but stands identified with nobody. He professes to abhor religious controversy, and disposes of all doctrinal questions by a motion of indefinite postponement. He can swallow the wafer with the Papist, receive the cup with the Protestant, and thrust the Westminster Confession and the Methodist Discipline into the same pocket. You can never find Liberalism at home, or rather, "he is never at home but when from home." He sails all waters under all colors; he exhibits the papers of all nations; but he hails from no port; he charters to no country; and therefore we strongly suspect that he is, in reality, a pirate.—G. C. Cookman.

CARD PLAYING AT HOME.

Playing cards for "pastime" or as an "innocent amusement" soon becomes a passion, and when once fixed a man will forego home, family, business, and pleasure, and suffer the loss of his all for the exciting scenes of the card-table. That accomplished writer, the late Dr. Holland, of Springfield, Mass., said: "I have all my days had a card-playing community open to my observation, and I am yet unable to believe that that which is the universal resort of the starved in soul and intellect, which has never in any way linked to itself tender, elevating, beautiful, associations—the tendency of which is to unduly absorb the attention from more weighty matters can recommend itself to the favor of Christ's disciples. The presence of culture and genius may embellish, but can never dignify it. I have this moment ringing in my ears the dying injunction of my father's early friend, 'Keep your son from cards. Over them I have murdered time and lost heaven.' Fathers and mothers, keep your sons from cards in the 'home circle.' What must a good angel think of a mother at the prayer-meeting asking prayers for the conversion of her son whom she allowed to remain at home playing cards for 'pastime'?"—Christian Advocate.

THE ONE NEEDED THING.

The saw-mill is a very old-fashioned one. It has an up-and-down saw, and the wheel that used to move it was driven by the stream that used to flow through the mill-race. The saw is still there. The mill seems to lack no machinery. A log, pushed up against the saw, is still on the carriage-way, and the work of sawing has progressed a foot or two. But for three years no progress has been made. The mill-race is dry; the wheel motionless. The machinery is rusty, and the timbers rotting. No oiling or repairs will make it move. The one needed thing is power. Are there not churches like this dead mill? The machinery may be all perfect; the work may be well laid out; but the first necessity is power. The best machinery will fail unless there is power to move it. The power is the Holy Spirit. Only his reviving and renewing influence can move the machinery of a dead church, or impart life to a dead soul. Let us first of all seek power from on high.—Cumberland Presbyterian.

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