

LOVE-SLAVES OF JESUS CHRIST

by Dr. Paul Rees

"The love of Christ constraineth us." 2 Cor. 5:14

Immediately one has the feeling that this is the language of intensity. No lazy, languid soul is speaking here. It is the flaming forth of a hot heart, the unashamed testimony of a life that is commanded by a mighty and all-mastering motive. That warm heart is the heart of St. Paul, that life is one which has left its indelible mark on twenty centuries of Christian history, and that motive is none other than the love of Christ.

"The love of Christ constraineth us." "Constraineth!" That is to say it impels me. One rendering of it is this: "The love of Christ shuts us up to a single purpose as within a narrow walled road." Another translator says it "monopolizes" us. I like that. Christ has won exclusive rights in me, says Paul. Unreservedly, I am given up to him.

A friend of mine, who for years served the cause of Christ in Korea, tells us a beautiful story. To a certain mission station were attached a doctor and his wife. The wife was the daughter of a retired lumberman and building contractor in eastern Canada. The old gentleman was an ardent disciple of Jesus Christ. One day he received a letter from his daughter. She told him about plans that were being made to erect a much needed building on their compound, and added, casually, that she wished he were there to oversee the work. She had no serious thought of his ever setting foot upon the soil of Korea. She therefore could scarcely believe her eyes when she received a letter stating that he would arrive on a certain boat and that he would direct the building project.

He came. Six days a week he gave his time and strength to the task of putting up the new house. When Sundays arrived, instead of getting all the rest he could, he would say to his daughter, "Now dear, give me a boy who can speak a bit of English, load us up with Scripture portions and tracts, and we shall see what we can do to bring the good news of Christ the Lord to this wonderful people." The daughter feared that he was overdoing, but he turned aside her gentle protest. One afternoon, on returning from a trek of considerable distance, the old gentleman fainted. When he revived, he found his daughter much disturbed. "You must not do this any more, father," she said. A faint light played over his face and tears stood in his eyes as he answered, "I wouldn't do it for anyone else but Jesus. He went all the way to Calvary for me, you know."

Ah, that is the sort of thing St. Paul is talking about in our text. The ever-blessed enslavement of a life that is claimed, captured and controlled by this Prince of all Lovers, the Lord Jesus Christ—the tyranny, if you please, not of force nor of fear, but of love!

Now let us consider the love of Christ as the Power of Our Salvation. Well enough do I know how old-fashioned that word "salvation" sounds to many of you. It has been so long in disuse in some quarters that it may have the merit of novelty. Perhaps it will help us all—conservatives and liberals alike—to pause in reflection upon some words recently uttered by Professor Hocking of Harvard University. "There is," says he, "more lostness, more widespread and deliberate lostness, in the world than ever before. Modern men have simply found new ways of being lost. Material progress does not carry with it religious progress."

Now it is the experience and teaching of St. Paul that the love of Christ, when it is received by sinful, self-centered men, creates a change so marked, so revolutionary, if you will, that it is like life from the dead. Let us carefully note his own words: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and

Home Missions

PRAISE NOTES

For the pastors who have entered into the field of Home Mission Work this year.

For the churches that have become self-supporting during the last year.

For the new field that has been entered at Dalhousie, N. B.

For a new record reached in giving, by the churches during the year 62-63.

For new names written down in the "Lambs book of Life," as a result of the Home Mission efforts.

For those who are labouring near Home Mission churches: giving of their time and support in the new endeavours.

For the Baptismal Service recently observed at Liverpool, at which time five candidates received the rite of Baptism.

For the new parsonage purchased at Digby, N. S.

PRAYER NEEDS

For each of the Home Mission pastors, that the Lord's Blessing may attend their ministry.

For other churches as they strive to become self-supporting, such as Amherst, etc.

For the areas unreached with the message of full salvation.

For the increased financial responsibility of the work.

For those who have recently received Christ as their Saviour, that they may become grounded in the Word of God, and in the truth of holiness.

For the evangelistic efforts in the new areas throughout the year.

For those who feel the call to this area of the work.

For the purchase of a new parsonage at Amherst.

rose again." In other words, the love of Christ is the introduction into life of a new motive, a new dynamic.

Life has two centers, says Paul. Those two centers are indicated in the two phrases "unto themselves" and "unto God." The self center! The God center! Salvation may be thought of, then as the divine grace that moves life over from the old center to the new.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring us Christians to the place where our inner life is truly and permanently organized around the new center of Christ's love. What follows is the life-long business of making the outer adjustments to this inner fact; facing every issue, settling every problem, meeting every temptation in the light of the supreme fact that we are not our own, but are bought with a price, even the price of Christ's sacrificial love.

The love of Christ is also the Passion of Our Service. The key to this thought is found in the twentieth verse of the chapter from which the text is taken: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." This applies first of all to the Christian minister. In a broader sense it applies to every redeemed follower of Calvary's Christ. The divine passion that has won us now claims the right to work through us. "We are ambassadors!" It is a notable description. An ambassador is a representative invested with the authority of an agent. He acts for another. The love of Christ creates the essential inspiration of all Christian ambassadorship.

Surely this involves the constraint of love's urgency. Now is the accepted time! Now! Now! Here is the sharp and compelling urgency of the matter. It is the drum beat of love's passion in service. It moved Jesus to desperate and determined action. Love must move us, dear ones, if we are to reap for Him.

— THE HERALD