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THE LOVE OF CHRIST

If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love. (John 15:10.)

It is true that God loves the world because He is Love, rather than because there is aught in them to call forth His love. It is also true that Christians are loved by both Father and Son in a special way. "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21.)

God's love for the world is all-embracing and powerful. There is no being so obscure and sin-blinded that he is not included in God's providence, even as he receives the free blessings of air and sunlight. That care will follow him until he is unshackled from sin and made to appreciate what has long been true: That none who will accept the responsibilities of life, are made in vain. The possession of life is pledge and proof that all are needed in God's economy.

The Lord illustrates in His dealings with men, the Saviour's commands to us. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:44.) Even some Christians overlook the fact that the Lord acts upon the principle that the best way to conquer an enemy is to convert him into a friend by kindness. They try to drive men to Christ to escape punishment. This is not the best motive, though it may sometimes succeed. The severest of all punishments was experienced by the Son of God to redeem men from the effects of sin. What heart can withstand the power of this truth when once realized?

A person's idea concerning God is a fair index of his relation toward God. "To the pure He will show himself pure, and to the froward He will show himself froward." (Ps. 18:26.)

Seen from afar, the Lord is clothed with terror and awfulness. A near approach changes the terror into worship. Those who see the Lord (He is manifest to those who love him, John 14:21,23), yield to Him homage, and glory, and praise, because they cannot help it. Their hearts bow down before Him, as must the hearts of all who are once made to appreciate goodness, truth and perfectness. In turn He gives to them Fatherly love and pity.

The love of Christ is as the love of a bride-groom. It is typified in the story of Isaac and Rebecca, and of Jacob, and Rachael, and prophetically told in the Songs of Solomon.

The love of Christ is what unites Christians, for the marriage is the complete expression of union between not only Head and body but all the members of the body.

His love rewards our faithfulness. We have His fellowship according

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to the degree of progress we have made in the path of life. That pathway is indeed holy, for His footsteps have pressed it. When He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them. However varied the experience of Christians may be, the Lord knows all about it, for He has felt the same, "yet without sin." Herein is that saying of His true: "I know my sheep and am known of mine." He knows us fully, we know Him in part, known as we progress, but when the journey is finished then shall we know even as also we are known. Let this truth encourage us to renewed effort, for each step in our progress will bring its own reward.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." This precept is for the beginner in the journey; and no Christian will ever get beyond it.

L. A. A.

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