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POWER OF CHRIST'S LOVE

When St. Paul appeared so entranced and overmastered by the claims of the Gospel that some accused him of being beside himself, this, you remember, was the only explanation he offered for his spiritual intensity: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died." *"If one died for all."* Oh, this is the fact in the history of Jesus Christ that touches the heart and draws it to God! The life of Christ inspires us; the example of Christ elevates us; the teachings of Christ convict us; but beyond all things else, it is the death of Christ that draws us. And yet here is a point where evangelical religion finds a sharp issue springing up between itself and other forms of belief. "Divine love we insist on as strongly as you do," says the objector, "as the only true motive-power for drawing souls to God; but in defining that love we take a wider sweep than you do. We find its presence and its inspiration in every flower, in every star, in every mountain and hill and valley, in the purple clouds and in the deep-voiced sea—these are its articulate voices. And if you recall us from nature to the Bible, even there we take a broader range than you do.

In the life and example of Christ, in his works of mercy and beneficence, and in the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, we find the highest exhibition of divine love. Isn't it somewhat narrow in Paul to shut himself up so closely to the cross for the source of his inspiration and enthusiasm? Isn't it somewhat narrow in you to insist on the death of Christ on Calvary as the great motive to love?" Narrow, I admit. But I remember, also, that sometimes narrow things are the most powerful. I recall a stream with which I am familiar, which at one point broadens out for miles into a wide and beautiful expanse of waters. Nothing could be more lovely than the tranquil flow and calm, majestic sweep of the waters

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at this place. But a little farther down the stream gathers itself up and plunges through a narrow gorge between the hills. There is far less of beauty here. But here is the place of power; here is where the huge wheels of industry are placed; here is where the factories, with their ponderous machinery, have been reared. So we admit that nothing could be more majestic than the life of Jesus Christ; nothing could be more beautiful and inspiring than his lofty teachings; nothing could be more quickening to our love than the study of his works of mercy. But, after all, it is the cross where the love of Christ culminates and manifests its greatest power. There the current of divine love gathers itself up and pours its mighty tide through one act—the greatest and most powerful which the universe has witnessed. There is where great souls, like Paul, have placed themselves to

get the fullest sway and sweep of the love God.—*A. J. Gordon.*

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— *January, 1884* —



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