

## Pastor and People.

### THE CHILD-LIKE HEART.

Lord, Thou wast made a child and why should I  
Think honour only due to hoary age?  
Give me a child-like heart, wherewith to try  
The doubts and changes of my pilgrimage.

Yet Thou did'st grow in stature, day by day,  
Unto Thy perfect manhood, undefiled.  
So let me profit, Lord, upon my way,  
In wisdom's growth a man, in love a child.

For, when I look for wisdom, Thou art wise,  
If I would love, Thy love perfection is.  
Come, weary heart, out of thy place arise!  
Thy life, thy love, thy service, all be His!

—Isaac Ogden Rankin.

### TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

While the principle of love is always and everywhere the same yet it has many expressions. And these vary not only from the conditions in which they show themselves, but also from the great motive forces underlying the manifestation. A brother's love is one form of love, a mother's love is another, a friend's love is another; each springing from its own source and armed with its own motive force; but higher, nobler and grander than all these is Christian love. It is girded with greater might and grace, and rises from the fountains of a deeper, diviner life, and has an infinitely wider reach than any other love. It is the love of God flowing into the human heart, and pouring itself along and through its channels, upon the sin-blighted conditions of our present life. It is characterized by self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice, and so it can do wondrous things—seemingly impossible things. Things that are altogether out of the range of ordinary accomplishment. Such things as these: Loving our enemies, blessing them that curse us, doing good to them that hate us, and praying for them that spitefully use us and persecute us. Moral miracles! the very thought of which it is not given to the heart of man to conceive till God's love is shed abroad there.

Without Me, the Master says, ye can do nothing—nothing that will lift men up and bless them and save them. Love alone saves. And love takes hold upon and employs in a subordinate way all means—money, position, influence, opportunity, character, intellect, everything—for the good of men. Love is the great worker of miracles—"All things are possible to him that believeth." Why? or How? Because "faith works by love." Faith in its outgoing brings love into play. A love invested with a Christly spirit and a Christly character. A love that seeketh not her own. It is this love that full of the spirit of self-abnegation reveals itself in these instances of Christian action.

Mr. Henry Moorhouse, the English evangelist, narrates this story: "A little time ago I was in New York, and a friend was telling me about a meeting she attended. Some twenty or thirty ladies met for prayer in connection with the work of trying to rescue some of the poor fallen ones. There was a young girl sitting there, with her face almost as bright as an angel; she had only been converted a little while, and she said she would like to tell about it. She lived in one of the very bad streets of New York. She was taken ill. No one came near her; she had been left alone for two or three days, when one day a knock came to the door and a young lady came in. 'I have heard about you,' she said to her sick sister, 'and I have come to see if I could help you.' She got up and swept the room, lighted the stove, smoothed the invalid's pillow, and said she would come again. When she went away she repeated a verse of Scripture, but it did not make any impression on the sick one. She came again, did up the little room, and went away, repeating a text. Still it made no impression. She came for several days, and one day she came, swept up the floor, cooked some dinner and made everything look nice. Then," continued the narrator, "she came and looked at me, and put her hand on my brow, and stooping down, she kissed me. As she kissed me I saw a tear trickling down her face. It was that kiss that did it." God's love flows out through the depths of the human heart. It comes to us along channels that be open to us. Another instance very like this is told by a minister who has seen a great deal of city mission work in New York. It gives us an important hint for the successful prosecution of Christian work. It tells us that at the root of everything there must be heart-deep, genuine Christian love. Such love as the apostle insists on when he says: "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

This minister, Dr. Miggins, says. "A lady came into the office of the city mission and wanted a few tracts. She didn't feel as if she could do very much of active work for the Lord, but felt like giving away a few tracts. One day she saw a policeman taking a poor drunken woman to jail, a miserable object, ragged, dirty, with hair disordered, but the lady's heart went out in sympathy toward her. She found the woman after she came out of jail, and just went and folded her arms around her, and kissed her. The woman exclaimed, 'My God, what did you do that for?' and she replied, 'I don't know, but I think Jesus sent me to do it.' The woman said, 'Oh, don't kiss me any more, you'll break my heart. Why, nobody has kissed me since my mother died.' But that kiss brought the woman to the feet of the Saviour, and for the last three

years she has been living a godly Christian life, won to God by a kiss." Is that not beautiful!

The heart swayed by the love of Jesus kisses the poor, hopeless outcast—and that revives the long-forgotten vision of home with its tender mother-love and unspeakable sweetness, and its early days of heart-purity and heart-peace. And on the swelling tide of recollection and of quick reflection and repentance, the soul is borne back, through the name of Jesus to the gates of life, life eternal. Wonderful! Wonderful it is that God should honour us in such glorious service! But alas! alas! how seldom we are ready for it. We are so full of ourselves. So taken up with the thought of what others might say. So bound hand and heart by conventionalities that our Christian liberty is lost to us. So concerned for the good opinion of men that we seldom or ever abandon ourselves to Christ or the power and leading of His good spirit. To exercise true Christian love our eyes must be filled with Jesus, and our hearts feeding and feasting upon his life and spirit. We must make clear and definite choice between ourselves and Jesus, or the world and Jesus, or Jesus' word and the world's word. We cannot serve God and another. God seeks an undivided heart. Our hearts cannot share their love between Christ and any one else. If we are full of others there is no room for Jesus. And so of the world, or desire of reputation, or anything else. Let us give the Lord His throne and let Him reign in us. Then shall a broad, generous sympathy, and true affection for the poor, bruised, suffering sons of men be ours. Then we shall appreciate little things as well as large things. The Rev. William Pennefather, M.A., well known in connection with the Mildmay Conferences, on one occasion took a sick lady a flower, and afterwards writing of it, said: "I took Miss B. some flowers, they were so lovely. I thought the poor soul would enjoy them, as she never gets out, and she did enjoy them. Oh! the pleasure of a flower in a sick-room!" Anything done in the spirit of love brings blessing with it. In the annals of the United States Christian Commission how many bright manifestations are found of this spirit. Let one stand for all, however ill it may represent them.

A chaplain had taken the place of a sick soldier, battle ensuing, and his horse plunging struck him on the knee-pan. His leg swelled and stiffened until the pain became unendurable. When he could no longer stand it, he gave his horse to a servant, and laid himself down on the ground. As he lay suffering he heard a voice, "Oh, my God!" He thought, "Can anybody be swearing in such a place as this?" He listened again, and a prayer began; it was from a wounded soldier. "How can I get at him?" was his first impulse. He tried to draw up his stiffened limbs, but could not rise. He put his arm around a sapling, drew up his well foot, and tried to extend the other without bending, that he might walk; but he fell back in the effort jarred through as though he had been stabbed. He then thought, "I can roll!" and over and over he rolled, in pain, through blood, and by dead bodies, until he fell against the dying man, and there he preached Christ and prayed.

At length one of the live officers came up, and said: "Where is the chaplain? One of the staff officers is dying." "Here he is! Here he is!" cried the sufferer. "Can you come and see a dying officer?" "I cannot move. I had to roll myself to this dying man to talk to him." "If I detain two men to carry you, can you go?" "Yes." They took him up gently and carried him. And that live-long night the two men bore him over the field, and laid him down beside bleeding, dying men, while he preached Christ and prayed.

What will love not do? It will forget its own suffering to help those who are in need of direction, consolation or peace. Oh! the utter self-abnegation of love! "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant." So God says, "Behold, My servant!"

This is the love of Jesus. May we be filled with it!

### THE HISTORY OF A HYMN.

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Martin Rinkart, the author of the hymn "Now thank we all our God," was born at Eilenburg, Saxony, on 23rd April, 1586. He pursued his theological studies at the University of Leipzig, and on finishing them was called as pastor to the Church of St. Nicolas in his native town, where from the year 1617 up to his death in 1649, he laboured with signal blessing. It was a time full of trouble, for Rinkart's active life embraced the whole period of the Thirty Years' War. The home of the poet suffered grievously. Eilenburg was captured first by the Swedes, looted, and then again by the Imperialists. The unoffending inhabitants were plundered, and the town for the most part burned to the ground. At the beginning of the war it numbered 894 dwellings, and at the close only 276; the rest became a prey to the flames, the town having been twice fired by the Swedes, and once by the Austrians. Those of the inhabitants who escaped the sword fell a prey to the pestilence. Four times it raged in the town during the war; and when at length peace returned, Eilenburg was nearly depopulated, and not much better than a heap of ruins.

It was no light task for the faithful pastor, when he was himself robbed of his all, to minister consolation and to inspire hope; and as no end came to the distress, even the stoutest hearts began to quail, and Rinkart himself knew not where to find words powerful enough to comfort the desponding. To all the other calamities was added at length the famine, and in vain the people of Eilenburg looked for help. The distress was everywhere.

Early in November of the year 1648 Pastor Rinkart sat

at the window of his study, and gazed thoughtfully on the desolate town square. The winter had just announced its approach in a light shower of snow, which lay on the streets and roofs, and the old man thought anxiously of the approaching rigorous season, which would greatly add to the misery of his flock. Suddenly the sound of a trumpet reached his ear. "Righteous God!" exclaimed the pastor, "foreign troops once more, what will become of us? We have not enough to satisfy our own hunger, and now these strangers will take the last bit of bread out of our mouths." Again the trumpet sounded, but this time much nearer. At the same moment Rinkart's faithful wife entered, and, in spite of her advanced age, with extraordinary nimbleness of step. "What, you sit here, Martin, while outside all the people are gathered together? A trooper has come, go and see what news he brings; it must be something extraordinary, for the people are full of joy." The old man rose, put on his satin cap, and said with a sad shake of the head, "What can it be? News of a new victory, of more bloodshed! When shall we have rest from the scourge of war? When will men cease to slay each other? The sacrifice is equally deplorable whether they wear the Imperial or the Swedish uniform." "You are in error, Martin. It is a Saxon soldier, probably sent by our Elector from Jorgau." Rinkart hastened out. He found the whole street in joyful agitation, the people embracing each other and weeping for gladness. The trumpeter had brought the news, that on 24th October peace had been concluded at Munster, in Westphalia. Rinkart returned to his study, and there, in silent prayer, gave thanks to God. When he opened his Bible his eye fell on the twenty-third verse of the fiftieth chapter of the Apocryphal book of Jesus Sirach—"Now thank we all our God, who doeth great things," etc. Moved by a resistless impulse he sat down at his desk, and it was as though the angel of peace, who finally had overcome the demon of war, whispered in his ear verse for verse of a hymn of thanksgiving. Out of the depths of his heart he wrote,—

Nun danket alle Gott.

and as he hummed the last line, his ear seemed to catch a soft melody. again he took up his pen, and in a few minutes he had also committed this to paper,—a simple air, but wonderfully touching.

Meantime the trooper had gone; but the people flocked in joyful excitement to the parsonage to wait upon their shepherd. He came out in his pastoral robes, and in earnest words the venerable man extolled the final deliverance. Then he knelt down with his flock, and bringing out of his pocket the newly composed hymn, he began to sing it. For the first time the new-born melody was heard from the lips of the old man, and when he had ended, all present were deeply moved, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, grasped him by the hand.

But the long years of sorrow had prematurely broken Rinkart's strength. A year later, on 8th December, 1649, he fell asleep, at the age of 67. All Eilenburg followed him to the grave, and as the mortal remains of their faithful shepherd were laid in the earth, no eye was dry. His hymn became the property of the whole Evangelical Church, and is wanting in no hymn book. On the ter-centenary of his birth, the town of Eilenburg placed a memorial tablet on the house in which he had dwelt, which was solemnly unveiled on Easter Monday of the year 1886.

### SUNDAY DESECRATION.

What are the chief causes of the Lord's day lawlessness?

1. Avarice, especially the greed and unscrupulousness of whiskey rings.
2. The exigencies of immense railway systems in America and Europe.
3. The disproportionate growth of great cities, and the accompanying increase of municipal misrule, especially under universal suffrage.
4. The example of Sunday advertising sheets, Sunday sporting papers, Sunday loafers' journals, and the general audacity of Sunday newspapers in securing a wide distribution by special trains and expresses.
5. Contagion from the loose Continental Sunday fashions of Europe, through an immense immigration.
6. Scepticism, infidelity, false liberalism.
7. Rude habits and religious destitution of many large frontier populations.
8. Inadequate efforts of the Church to instruct the masses by both example and precept as to the right use of Sunday.
9. The growth of luxury, the separation of classes, and the apathy of the well-to-do as to the condition of the poor.
10. The very general introduction of machinery in nearly every branch of productive industry.—*Joseph Cook.*

### WHILE THE DAY LASTS.

It will not last long. Your day, my day, the world's day, the day of opportunity, the day of grace, the day of salvation all days are swiftly passing away; and the great day, the last day, will surely and speedily come. Now, there is opportunity for us to work; by-and-by the time will be past. While it is day we may work the work of God, and do what he has commanded us; but if we idle this present opportunity away, it will never return, and the neglect of to-day may never be repaired. To-morrow will bring the work for to-morrow, and every day and every year will bring its appropriate duties. Let the work of to-day be done to-day, and then we may calmly await the coming of the morrow, if the morrow shall ever come.—*The Christian.*