

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

by James Smith

Smith's devotional displaying the fullness, freeness, and immutability of Christ's grace and love, focusing on Jesus' intercessory prayer and revealing His infinite, eternal love for His people with tenderness that passes knowledge.

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The Love of Christ! The Fullness, Freeness, and Immutability of the Savior's Grace Displayed! By James Smith

Author Note

James Smith (1802-1862) was a predecessor of Charles Spurgeon at New Park Street Chapel in London from 1841 until 1850. Early on, Smith's readings were even more popular than Spurgeon's! My object is to lead the mind . . . from SELF - to Jesus; from sin - to salvation; from the troubles of life - to the comforts of the gospel. My aim is . . . to humble the sinner - and exalt the Savior; to strip the creature - and place the crown on the head of God's free grace!

I cannot ascribe too much to Jesus - or too little to man!

Source Note and Special Thanks

God's servants at <http://www.gracegems.org/> updated, revised, and adapted this beautiful material to modern English. They adopted a 'flowing poetic form' for most of the quotes as an aid to reflection and comprehension. <http://www.gracegems.org/19/literature.htm> Grace Gems Copyright Policy: We frequently get requests asking for permission to use literature from Grace Gems. Since everything on our website is public domain, there is no need to ask permission. We encourage others to use our literature in any way they desire. Forward it to others - add it to your website - put it in your church bulletins - make it into books or booklets for distribution. Also, feel free to add a "link" to <http://www.gracegems.org/> on your website - there is no need to ask for permission. (Formatted for e-Sword by Tom Rightmer using e-Sword ToolTip v3.44)

Preface The design of the present work is to set forth the love of Jesus, with a view to endear him to the hearts of his people, and draw forth their love to him in return. The love of Christ is one of the principal lessons we have to learn, one of the great subjects we are to study - and yet how little do we know of it in an experimental and practical manner? It is set before us in the word of God in a great variety of ways, and this little book is intended to bring it nearer to the eye and the heart. We shall only . . . be confident in God, diligent in the Lord's work, and enjoy a peaceful conscience - as we know the love of Christ which passes knowledge! And we never shall know much of the love of Jesus - unless it is set before the eye of the mind - as the object of faith, and the subject of devout meditation.

It was Paul's desire to know him - and to know Jesus is the desire of every Christian, in proportion as he is taught by the same Spirit.

Reader, the subject is set before you - but remember that the Holy Spirit alone can bring it home to your soul, and seal it upon your heart. And your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit unto those who ask him, for this purpose. Ask, then, and receive - that your joy may be full. That the Lord may abundantly bless this little work to every reader, and endear Jesus to every heart - is the

fervent prayer of the author, James Smith, New Park Street Chapel, London I. The AUTHOR of this Love 1. Christ's DEITY The Lord Jesus Christ is God - possessed of all divine attributes, and entitled to all divine honors. He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit - God over all, and blessed for evermore! He is naturally, essentially, perfectly, and eternally possessed of everything peculiar to Deity. He owes His existence to none. He says, "I am Jehovah, and beside Me there is no Savior!" He is God - and there is no other. There is no other name given under Heaven, or among men, whereby we can be saved. He is the Rock of Ages. He is the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, gracious, just, holy, and unchangeable I AM!

Angels worship Him, devils obey Him, saints love Him, and sinners will bow to Him!

He is the author of . . .

Creation,

Providence,

Redemption, and Glorification!

He . . . produced all things by His power, formed them by His wisdom, supplies them by His bounty, rules them by His instruments, and employs them according to His sovereign will.

He is above all - in the glory of His nature.

He possesses all - by essential right.

He will judge all - according to His righteousness.

All things are dependent upon Him, and all rational beings are accountable to Him.

Nothing can escape His eye, none can fly out of His hand!

He is exalted above all, and remains King forever!

He is . . . the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the only supreme Law-giver of the universe!

He is naturally, essentially, and eternally God: one with the Father, equal to the Father and infinite as the Father.

Thus, the Scriptures reveal Him; as such, saints acknowledge Him, and join the angelic host in worshiping, praising, and adoring Him! As such, He loves all His people - yes, He is love to them. As such, they love Him - and trust their eternal interests in His hands! No person can have right views of the love of Christ - who has not right views of the deity of Christ. His divinity gives lustre and glory - to His love. If He were not God - His love would be only a passion like ours, and would fluctuate and change. But being divine - His love is an infinite perfection, and remains immutably the same!

"Having loved His own who were in the world - He loved them unto the end!" John 13:1 "Thee we adore, Eternal Word, The Father's equal son! By heaven's obedient hosts adored, Ere time its course begun! The first creation has displayed Thine energy divine; For not a single thing was made By other hands than Thine!

What wonders in your person meet, My Savior all divine;

I fall with rapture at your feet, And would be wholly Thine!"

2. Christ's HUMANITY The word was made flesh and dwelt among us. The children being partakers of flesh and blood - he also himself took part of the same. He was made in all points like unto his brethren - that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. He took our nature - that he may remove our sin. He became as one of us. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He was really and truly man. He possessed our whole nature - body, soul, and spirit. It was the nature of the Virgin - yet preserved from sin or corruption by the overshadowing and operation of the Holy Spirit. He felt - as I feel; feared - as I fear; and sympathized with humanity in all its weaknesses and sorrows. He suffered privations and pains, and offered up strong cryings and tears unto him who was able to save him from death - and was heard in that he feared. He was in the likeness of sinful flesh - being made of a woman, and made under the law. His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and was made an offering for sin. His body . . . thirsted at Jacob's well, hungered in the desert, bled in the garden, and fainted as it ascended Calvary with the cross.

He was the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, and the Son of Man. The Father prepared his body; the Spirit breathed his soul; and the Virgin brought him forth - to labor, sorrow, suffer, and die! He was weak and illiterate in infancy, grew up to youth and manhood by slow and normal degrees - growing in wisdom and stature in favor with God and man. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners! He was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh - one with us, brother to us, and employed for us - to work out our present and eternal salvation!

He was the promised seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head; and by means of death, to destroy him who had the power of death, and deliver those who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

He loves with all the majesty of God - and with all the tenderness of man. His love is as glorious as his divine nature - and as peculiar as his person. It has the strength of God - and the gentleness of sinless man! Majesty and mildness, greatness and condescension, shine forth in his love.

Behold! the Son of God appears, To save from sin and woe;

He leaves the radiant throne on high, To dwell with men below!

Clothing himself with mortal flesh, He flew to our relief;

Sorrows his chief acquaintance were, And his compassion grief! From Bethlehem's inn to Calvary's cross, Affliction marks his road; And many a weary step he took To bring us back to God!

3. Christ's COMPLEX PERSON

Great is the mystery of godliness - God was manifest in the flesh! He took humanity into union with his divinity - and the two distinct natures constitute his complex person. In him, dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The two natures are united - but neither loses its peculiar

properties or attributes; the Godhead does not become manhood - nor does the manhood become Godhood. They may be distinguished - but cannot be divided. God and man - is one Christ. He sympathizes with deity - as he is human. He possesses all that is peculiar to God - and all that is common to man. He stands between Heaven and earth - and comprehends both in himself: in him, finite and infinite meet - in him, time and eternity unite! O amazing mystery! God has come down and dwells in manhood - manhood is taken up and dwells in Godhead.

Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us." The natures are united in a mysterious, ineffable manner. No man can understand or explain how; but we believe the fact - and enjoy the benefit.

Jesus loves with all the infinity of his Godhead, and with all the tenderness of his humanity! The love of deity - flows through his human heart; and is softened, sweetened, and rendered suitable to us in our fallen and weak condition. The whole of Christ's person goes forth towards us - in the exercise of love, mercy, and favor. We may approach him without dread - and enjoy him without alarm.

He is man - this invites us; he is God - this awes and solemnizes us; he is God-man - this renders him exactly suitable to us. The sinner has nothing to fear - the saint has everything to expect; his majesty will not make us afraid - neither will his hand be heavy upon us.

Meekness - and majesty, compassion - and power, mercy - and justice, love - and holiness, tenderness - and immutability - these all dwell and harmonize in him - and all smile upon the praying soul. His love is . . . human - and divine, finite - and infinite, limited - and illimitable; yet it is immutable and unchanging!

He is all-loving - and altogether lovely!

O Jesus! shed your love abroad in my heart, day by day! O to know and love you more!

Lost sinner, this love of Jesus is just what you need; it would at once make you holy, happy, and useful.

You never can be happy - until you know the love of Christ.

You never can be holy - until you feel it working in your heart.

You never will be useful - but as it constrains you to live to his glory.

It is a love which surpasses knowledge. But though it cannot be fully comprehended, it may be known so as to be enjoyed! And you may know it! May the Holy Spirit guide your heart into his love.

Jesus as God and man is dear, To those who know his name;

It charms away a sinner's fear, And sets his heart on flame! The tender husband, brother, friend,
Meet in this lovely man; And these are charms to recommend Or surely nothing can.

Behold the man! his wounds, his smart, See how he loved and died! The sight will melt your stony heart,
And crucify your pride!

II. The OBJECTS of Christ's Love Jesus loves Sinners CHOSEN by God The sinners whom Jesus loves, were chosen by God from eternity, as the effect of his infinite grace. They were chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Election separates them from the rest, by writing their names in the Lamb's book of life; it provides for their effectual calling, sanctification, and glorification. Election distinguishes them from others, by conferring special favors upon them - but in no sense injures the rest.

Jehovah loved them with an everlasting love; he chose them in Christ of his free favor; he gave them to Jesus to be his portion, care, and charge

- and so made them a special people unto himself, above all people who dwell on the face of the earth. This choice was entirely an act of grace, a manifestation of his infinite kindness towards them, an expression of his good will to them. It was not for anything which the Lord foresaw would be in them, or done by them - but only because the Lord loved them! They are called his jewels, his delight, his portion, and his love. Jesus calls them his sheep, his bride, his friends, and his brethren!

Election was God's first act of grace towards them, and is the foundation of all his following acts of grace. It is . . . the opening of the fountain of life for them; the giving of all-spiritual blessings to them; and the appointing of them to a kingdom and a crown. To be chosen by God - is to be honored in the highest possible manner - and all his saints have this honor. All who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, who pant for holiness and seek to be found in him - are chosen of God, and are the objects of the Redeemer's love! They were chosen for him, as well as chosen by him; and he says to them, "You have not chosen me - but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit, so shall you be my disciples." The Father loves the elect, just as he loves Christ! "May they be brought to complete unity - to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them - even as you have loved me!" John 17:23. He loves the elect in Christ - and will love them as long as he loves Christ, even forever! Happy are the people who are in such a case; yes, happy are the people who are chosen of God, and beloved of Jesus.

But, reader, do not pervert this doctrine, nor allow Satan to make it a stumbling block to your soul. It throws no impediments in a sinner's way, it prevents no one from coming to Jesus. It is only the love of God intervening on behalf of myriads of the fallen race of Adam; intervening to prevent their everlasting destruction. It ought not to discourage anyone, nor would it - if it were rightly understood; but it is a source of unspeakable comfort to the believer who has made his calling and his election sure; and it brings great glory to God.

There is salvation provided for every one who is willing to be saved in God's way; the invitation of the gospel is, "Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." No one is excluded from the gospel feast - but he who refuses to come; and because God determined to make some willing, and in accomplishing his purpose actually does make them willing - shall it be said that his doing so discourages or prevents any from accepting the free invitation of the gospel? Surely it ought not. Reader, if you are willing to be saved by Christ Jesus, he is willing to save you. If you will submit to receive, wear, and plead the righteousness of God - it is yours.

If, clothed in the wedding garment which is presented to you, you are willing to come in, and sit down, and partake of the gospel feast - you are heartily welcome; no one can be more welcome; nor shall you ever be thrust out. But if indeed you are willing - then God by his Holy Spirit has made you so, and this is the effect of his electing love; for when his servants are sent to others, they will not come; they say unto God, "Depart from us!" And of the Savior, "We will not have this man to rule over us!"

How free, how glorious, was the grace, How wonderful Jehovah's love, That chose our souls, our time, our place, Before he bade the planets move! No claim had we who now enjoy, The smiles of our redeeming God, He only knows who chose us, why Our hearts are his divine abode. When he shall call us up above, And we shall stand before his throne, We will ascribe it to his love, His sovereign, saving love, alone!

Jesus loves Sinners PREDESTINED to be sons of God

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us - that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

Those whom Jesus loves, being chosen of God to holiness here on earth, and happiness in eternity - are predestined to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace. They were pre-appointed to be raised above the condition of mere creatures - and to form a family, a household for God. They were predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. They were to partake of his nature, receive of his spirit, wear his image, and be associated with him in honor and glory forever. To this, the Father appointed them, out of his richest grace; to this, the Spirit calls them in the day of his divine power; and they all appear the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls them his brethren - heirs of God, and joint heirs with himself. Being related to him, they have a saving interest in him, are beloved by him, are in union with him - and shall never be separated from him.

O wondrous mercy! That God should condescend to make up a family of such vile, polluted, and wretched beings as we are!

O wondrous mercy! That He should write our names in his book of life, give us the gift of the Holy Spirit, privilege us to claim relationship at His throne, and associate us with Jesus as fellow-heirs!

O wondrous mercy! That all this should have been fixed upon and settled - before the world began, and all for the praise of His glorious grace!

Surely we ought "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity!" "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe!" The appointments of God's providence should raise our gratitude and deepen our humility; they are intended to cheer our hearts and comfort our souls; but they never were designed to rule our conduct or guide our feet; for this purpose God's word alone should be used.

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God - are children of God!" Romans 8:14. If we are sons of God - we shall be led by the Spirit of God. And if we are led by the Spirit of God - we shall be led in the paths of righteousness and holiness. The sons of God do not, cannot - love sin, live in sin, or make light of sin! He who loves and lives in sin - is the child of Satan! The child will resemble its parent, and all God's children resemble him - in his hatred to sin, and love to holiness. Let us not, therefore, imagine that we are the Lord's - if we live as the world lives, in the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life!

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world - to be holy and blameless in His sight!" Ephesians 1:4

If God has chosen us - it is to holiness! If He has predestined us - it is that we may bear the image and breathe the spirit of His beloved Son. Predestination secures holiness! All who are predestined to eternal life . . . love holiness, mourn over sin, and seek to be like Jesus!

God's providential appointments are never contrary to his precepts; nor can any doctrine set us free from the obligation that we are under, to walk blameless in all the ordinances and commandments of the lord. The sinner's responsibility is not in the least affected, by God's decrees; nor is the saint discharged from obedience, because he is appointed to eternal life; but he is bound faster than ever, and laid under deeper obligations. Let these things be carefully observed, lest we injure ourselves by that which ought to increase our holiness and happiness! May not the sovereign Lord on high Dispense his favors as he will;

Choose some to life - while others die, And yet be just and gracious still? Shall man reply against the Lord, And call his Maker's ways unjust; The thunder of whose dreadful word, Can crush a thousand worlds to dust?

But, O, my soul! if truths so bright, Should dazzle and confound your sight, Yet still his written will obey, And wait the great decisive day!

Jesus loves Sinners Who BELIEVE on His Name All of God's elect people are brought to believe in Jesus.

They all are convinced of their sin and danger.

They all hear of Jesus as a refuge from the storm and tempest.

They all fly to him to hide in his open wounds.

They all confide in his word, are persuaded of his ability to save them, and venture their souls on his merits.

They all surrender themselves to him, to be saved and ruled by him.

They all desire to be found in him - living, dying, and forever.

They all feed upon him as their daily food.

They all trust in him as their unchanging friend.

They all submit unto him as their reigning Lord.

They all see the Son and believe on him. And they all have eternal life.

Jesus loves all such. No poor sinner ever fled to his arms for protection or came to his pardon-office for remission of sin - but he received him and manifested his love. "I love those - who love me" is his language, "and they that seek me early - shall find me." All who receive his word - sit down at his feet; and all who sit at his feet - share in his love. None ever sought him in vain, or pleaded with him and were rejected. The simple believer who has nothing to plead but his promise, and is opposed by Satan, sin, and the world - is sure to find a place in his tender heart and to receive a blessing from his gracious hands. He will never cast out any sincere comer - this would be contrary to his nature, opposed to his word, and would reflect dishonor on his character. He loves to witness the first moving of the heart towards him; and like the Father of the Prodigal, when the soul is a great way off - he runs to meet it, falls on the neck and kisses it!

He rejoices over the person who brings a burdened soul to his feet, and lifts up the tearful eye to his throne; and though Satan may accuse, and a long black catalogue of crimes seems to forbid the comer - he says, "I will be gracious - because I will be gracious; and I will have compassion - because I will have compassion." Never was there a spark of love in a poor sinner's heart - but it flowed from the loving heart of Jesus! And never was there a principle of faith - but it was a fruit of his love to the soul.

All our springs are in him, all our graces flow from him, all our souls depend upon him, all our praises should ascend unto him, and so at last shall we be forever with him!

Praise the Lord!

Reader, have you ever fled for refuge to this Savior? Do you confide in his word? Have you embraced his invitation? Are you relying on his atoning sacrifice? Do you trust his promises? Is it your daily endeavor to conform your life to his precepts?

If so - then Jesus loves you! He loves you as freely, as tenderly, and as strongly - as he loved Lazarus, or Peter, or Paul. Whoever looks to him alone for eternal life, and aims to please him by making his word his daily rule - is certainly the object of Christ's redeeming love.

Faith honors him - but unbelief is a practical rejection of his word. Unbelief manifests itself by an avowed preferring of the world, or sin, or Satan to Jesus; it offers him the greatest possible insult, and perseveres in it. Therefore that terrible sentence is passed, "He who believes not - shall be damned!"

What shall the dying sinner do, Who seeks relief from all his woe? Where shall the guilty conscience find A balm, to heal his tortured mind? In vain we search, in vain we try, Until Jesus brings his gospel nigh;

'Tis here we find a cure for sin, A balm to make the conscience clean! Be this the pillar of our hope! This bears the fainting spirit up. Who need the grace, who trust the word, Shall find salvation in the Lord!

Jesus loves ALL Believers, Though Weak and Fearful

Many of the objects of the Savior's love, are full of fears, and are harassed with perplexing doubts. They think that Jesus cannot love them - because they are so vile, so sinful, and so weak! But Jesus does love such - all such. Satan may and will harass them, and fill them with perplexity and gloom; but the heart of Jesus is toward them, he . . . listens to their complaints, hears their cries, and loves their persons.

He says to such, "Look unto me - and be saved! Call upon me - and I will hear you. Fear not - O worm Jacob!"

You may seem to be as useless, as weak, and as despicable as a worm! But you are creeping after him, you are going out in desires, prayers, and holy longings after him; and he says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love - therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you." Your going out after him - is the effect of his drawing; and his drawing you - is the evidence of his love to you. Your sense of weakness, of your unworthiness, of your fearfulness - is no proof against you - but rather for you; the sense of all this, is permitted to manifest the greatness of Christ's condescension - and to fill you with gratitude towards him for loving one so sinful as you are!

If you are panting after an interest in him; if you are renouncing self; if you are following after truth, peace and holiness; if you hate sin and desire to be delivered from it - then you are the object of his redeeming love! He says to you, "As the Father has loved me - so I have loved you!" Your doubts may rob you of your comfort - but they shall not deprive you of your title to Heaven! Your fears may distress you - but they shall never separate you from the love of Jesus! Your weakness may alarm you - but it will never cause Jesus to reject you! Your evil questionings may keep you from the enjoyment of the solid peace to which you are entitled - but they shall never turn away the heart of Jesus from you!

Remember - your doubtings and questionings things dishonor Jesus! Therefore lift up your prayer against them; make use of every means that is calculated to destroy or suppress them; and never, as you value your peace or the Savior's honor, never by any means encourage them! He loves you - but not your doubts, your fears, or your misgivings! For these he will reprove you - but cannot cease to love you.

He admires a strong faith - and he gives it; but he says, "For this, I will be inquired of by my people - to do it for them."

You know that you cannot live without Christ. You would not give up your hope for a thousand worlds. You have at times enjoyed his love. His word of promise has been sweet to you. You want to love him with all your strength, to believe in him without doubt - and to enjoy his sweet presence. These things prove that you have eternal life in your bosom.

Unbelievers are total strangers to such holy exercises. The world despises or disregards them. You have a little faith - and Jesus loves little faith.

Therefore look to him more simply, cry to him for more grace, and endeavor to have more confidence in his blessed word. He loves poor, sorrowful, seeking sinners. He loves them - though they doubt him, grieve him, and listen to his enemy! He loves them - though they will not believe it - but too often believe just the contrary. The desires you feel, the conflicts you experience, the temptations you endure, and the fears that often agitate your breast

- combine to prove that you are the object of the Savior's redeeming love. "Blessed are the poor in spirit - for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness - for they shall be filled." You can say, you do say, and often say in spirit, if you do not use the words:

Take my poor heart, just as it is, Set up therein your throne; So shall I love you above all, And live to you alone!

Complete your work, and crown your grace, That I may faithful prove; And listen to that small still voice, Which only whispers love! Which teaches me what is your will, And tells me what to do; Which covers me with shame, when I Do not your will pursue!

III. The NATURE of the Love of Christ Christ's Love is ETERNAL

"I have loved you, My people, with an everlasting love! With unfailing love, I have drawn you to Myself!" Jeremiah 31:3 The love of Christ is unending; it is not a passion of His humanity - but a perfection of His divinity. He has always existed - and He has always loved His people. His people . . . always had a place in His thoughts, have ever been before His eye, and have always been loved by Him!

He has loved them - ever since He knew them - and He foreknew them from eternity! His love ran through the boundless ages of eternity past - and fixed upon poor sinners who were to appear during the existence of time; and having fixed upon them - maintains its hold. When He created the earth, spread abroad the heavens, and gave to the sea His decree - His love was fixed upon His people! Their welfare, in connection with His Father's glory - was the object which He sought in all things. Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth! That Jesus should have fixed His love upon such poor, depraved, insignificant creatures - and that from eternity past! When we meditate upon eternity past - we can say in reference to the most distant periods, "My Savior loved me then! He loved me from all eternity!" Glorious truth! He always loved me - and He always will love me! He loved me . . . before angels existed, before devils appeared, before sin was committed!

He loved me, when the Godhead dwelt all alone! O the depths! Surprising mystery! It seems almost too good to be true! But God has said it, and my soul shall rejoice in it and praise Him for it!

He loved me before he appeared to represent me. His love to me is as eternal as His nature - without beginning of days, or end of years. From His love, as from a mighty ocean, flows . . . all the acts of His power, all the displays of His benevolence, all the discoveries of His grace, and all the provisions of His gospel.

It is sweet, to silently meditate upon the thought, of such a vile and insignificant creature as I am - that Jehovah-Jesus not only thought of me - but eternally loved me with all the strength of His Deity! He so loved me, as to be willing, when it became necessary - to take my nature, and to save me by his humiliation, sufferings, and death!

There is something very sweet in the thought, that the love of Christ is ETERNAL! That as He always existed - that He always loved His people; and that with Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning.

If you the sweetest joys would prove, O, think on everlasting love; The love which ever did exist, In our Immanuel's glorious breast!

Then, O, how ancient is the date, How free, and how supremely great; So great, that mortals here below, Never can express, or fully know! This love abundantly confirms, The wavering faith of feeble worms, O, 'tis an everlasting rock, For all the dear Redeemer's flock!

Christ's Love is SOVEREIGN and FREE

It was not on account of anything in his people, or because he foresaw that they would do anything good - that Jesus fixed his love upon them; but it was his own free act - -a display of his sovereign pleasure. It seemed good in his sight to love them - and he fixed his love upon them accordingly. There was everything in them, and about them, calculated to raise his wrath and provoke his displeasure; but he determined to love them, notwithstanding all, and to glorify himself in them - in time and through eternity. He loves them - because he will love them; and we can assign no other reason. He loved Jacob - and hated Esau! He chose Isaac - and rejected Ishmael! And he gives no account of any of these matters.

He is impartially just - while he is sovereignly gracious. He is the just judge of all the earth, and cannot but do right! The infinite wisdom of his nature prevents a mistake! His infinite holiness forbids us to think of him as doing anything cruel. And his infinite justice effectually renders justice to every being in the universe.

He loves whom he will - but he is just, and even merciful to all. He freely chooses those who are to be the partners of his throne, and partakers of his glory - but he righteously deals with every one in justice, and according to his word. He does not hate one - because he loves another. He can hate nothing but sin - or sinners on account of sin. Nor does he debase one - because he exalts another. His gracious favors are his own - and he may dispense them just as he pleases. His creatures are his property - and he may dispose of them as he will. All deserve his wrath - and it is a wonder of wonders that any should be the objects of his love. Let us not cavil at his ways - but let us admire his condescension!

Let us not murmur that he does not love all sinners - but bless him that he loves some sinners; and especially if we have scriptural reason to conclude that he loves us. He may justly have banished us from his presence for sin - let us bless him that he has saved us by his free and sovereign grace. He will be gracious to whom he will be gracious - and have compassion on whom he will have compassion. He loves as a sovereign - but his love is consistent with all the other perfections of his nature, and with the principles of his just and righteous government.

If he had sought for a reason in his fallen creatures, as to why he should love them - he would never have found one! But he loves us freely, redeems us in a just and equitable way, sanctifies in perfect consistency with the peculiarities of our nature - and thus makes us lovely in the sight of all pure and intelligent beings. To him who washed us in his blood, Let us our loudest songs prepare;

He sought us wandering far from God, And now preserves us by his care!

While angels praise the heavenly King, And worship him as God alone, Let us with exultation sing He wears our nature on the throne!

Sweet truth! it yields unceasing cause Of wonder and of praise above; That man who late accursed was, Should be the object of such love!

Christ's Love is INFINITE and UNCHANGEABLE The love of Christ is an infinite love - its heights and depths, its breadths and lengths - surpass our knowledge! The whole of His nature and perfections are thrown into His love, therefore he is said to BE LOVE. He cannot love His people more than He does - nor will He love them less! Until we can comprehend infinity and measure eternity - we cannot know the love of Christ to perfection.

Love in us - rules us; just so, the infinite love of Jesus rules him. All that He has ever purposed, promised, or performed for His people - has flowed from this ocean of divine love! He is a globe of love - without beginning or end! He is a sea of love - without fault of defect! Only an infinite intellect can grasp Christ's love - only eternity is sufficient to reveal it to our minds. Christ's love will be always unfolding - but never fully unfolded. It will be always displaying - but never fully displayed. We may stand in the center and endeavor to follow its lines - but Christ's love defies our powers, and drowns our thoughts in its immensity!

Christ's love can never be diverted from its objects; it is immutably fixed upon them - and remains fixed forever! Had it been possible to have turned its current, it would have been done long ago; but it is still the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God.

Having loved His own - He loves them unto the very end. Nothing present or future, above or below - can ever separate believers from the love of Jesus! On this rock they rest - amidst all the storms of life! In this fortress they hide - when dangers of every kind surround them! At this fountain they live - when every creature-stream is dried up! No love is unchangeable - but the love of Jesus! His love is like the great mountains, and abides forever firm!

O believer, admire and adore! Jesus continues to love you - amidst all your coldness, darkness, and proneness to wander; therefore he restores your soul and causes you to walk in the paths of righteousness. Satan may harass and accuse you, the world may frown upon and persecute you - but Jesus rests in His love, and rejoices over you with singing! And amidst all the changes which we feel within and without, we ask with holy Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" And with him we reply, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow - not even the powers of Hell, can separate us from God's love! No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed, nothing in all creation - will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge!" Ephesians 3:17-19 Jesus, my lord, appears, And pleads for me on high; The Father bows his ears, And lays his thunder by; Not all that Hell or sin can say, Shall turn his heart, his love away!

Then let my soul arise, And tread the tempter down; My Captain leads me forth To conquest and a crown! A feeble saint shall win the day, Though death and Hell obstruct the way!

Christ's Love is MUNIFICENT

Love is always generous - but the love of Jesus is especially so; he considers nothing too good for his people, but promises that he will withhold from them no good thing. By the work of the Spirit, he prepares the mind for the reception of blessings - and then bestows them in the most generous manner. He gives grace and glory; temporals and spirituals. He gives like a God! He gave himself for them, as their ransom; and he gives himself to them - as their portion. He brought all the fullness of God, in order to ensure them a supply; and he has thrown open the storehouse of his mercies saying, "Ask - and you shall receive; seek - and you shall find; knock - and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him that knocks - it shall be opened."

Jesus delights to bestow favors upon his people - and never withholds, unless his glory is at stake. He gives liberally and upbraids not. He gives . . . a free pardon to the guilty transgressor, a complete righteousness to condemned malefactor, a holy nature to the depraved and polluted, a full salvation to the lost, rest to the weary, food to the hungry, peace to the distressed, Heaven to the homeless and destitute, and himself to whoever will receive him!

He never will turn away from us from doing us good - but will rejoice over us to do us good, with his whole heart, and with his whole soul. His tender heart feels for human woe, and his bountiful eye sparkles with delight - when the empty sinner comes to receive the water of life freely. He never did . . . frown upon the empty, refuse the poor, or drive the needy from his throne; but he always received them graciously, supplied them freely, and laid them under everlasting obligations. He bids those who have received once - to come again; to come often, to come boldly to his throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help them in every time of need. This filled the Psalmist with admiration, astonishment, and pleasure, and led him to exclaim, "O how great is your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear you: which you have wrought for those who trust in you!" Jesus ever loves and gives lovingly to his people. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man who trusts in him."

Reader, Jesus is willing to bless you to confer the richest blessings upon you, blessings which not only make you happy in time - but happier still - when time shall be no more. Do not slight this kind and gracious Savior - but draw near to his throne, tell him your needs, plead his precious word, and prove the munificence of his love. The lord will bless each contrite heart, To all who humbly seek his face, He does the best of gifts impart - The priceless treasures of his grace! No perils need their breast alarm, Though thickest dangers round they see;

God will preserve their souls from harm, And their eternal portion be! But while your guardian arms are spread Round those who you their refuge make, Where shall the sinner hide his head, When you, O Lord, shall vengeance take!

Christ's Love is ALL-SUFFICIENT "The unsearchable riches of Christ!" Ephesians 3:8 The love of Jesus is enough to satisfy and over-fill the most enlarged mind; it comprehends everything that is valuable, delightful, pleasant and sweet. It contains unsearchable riches - riches which will avail beyond the grave and pass current in eternity; riches which are always useful and which never can be lost. It opens a paradise of pleasure to the view, far more glorious than the paradise Adam enjoyed - a paradise where we can walk with God in peace and comfort; and where rivers of

pleasure eternally pour forth their streams. It is a paradise . . . whose flowers never fade, whose trees never wither, and where no wily serpent is found! The plants are immortal, the trees are always fruitful, and there an infinite variety of pleasures forever flow! The love of Christ is sweeter than the choicest wine, and more pleasant than the most enchanting music! The love of Christ is more desirable than . . . food to the palate, beauty to the eye, music to the ear, fragrance to the smell, health to the sick, an estate to the poor, liberty to the slave, or Heaven to the weary soul. The love of Christ includes all the elements of eternal glory, happiness, and peace. To be the object of the Savior's love - is to be blessed indeed! Such a one may say, "All things are mine! Things present or future, things on earth or in Heaven, things of time or eternity - all are mine! I am Christ's!" Jesus says to me, "Fear not, for I am the all-sufficient One! I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward! My strength shall support you; my fullness shall supply you; my arm shall defend you; my angels shall guard you; my presence shall go with you; my Father shall bless you and visit you; my Spirit shall teach and sanctify you; and my Heaven shall receive you; therefore, FEAR NOT!"

Surely the love of Jesus is more than enough! It can make us . . . bold in danger; happy in sickness; joyful in tribulation; contented under losses; satisfied in poverty; triumphant in death; useful in time; and glorious in eternity!

Surely the love of Jesus contains . . . the object of all spiritual desires, the answers to all scriptural prayers, and the essence of blessedness itself!

It includes all that is divine, glorious, and magnificent!

He who is not satisfied with the love of Christ - cannot be satisfied either by God or man. Christ is love, his love is all-sufficient. O to know more of this precious love of Christ!

O, love divine, how sweet thou art! When shall I find my longing heart All taken up by thee?

Grant me, O gracious Lord to prove! The sweetness of redeeming love, The love of Christ to me!

God only knows the love of God, O that it now were shed abroad, In this poor stony heart!

Give me to know this love divine; This heavenly portion, Lord, be mine, Be mine this better part!

Christ's Love is WISE and HOLY

Jesus is infinitely wise and immutably holy - therefore his love is a wise and holy love. We too often think him to be such a one as ourselves, and therefore are mistaken in reference to the manner in which he reveals his love. He wisely manifests his love, so as to . . . discountenance sin, encourage holiness, and further his people in their heavenly way and work. He . . . visits in trials, reproves for folly, smites for sin, and withholds the light of his countenance to testify his disapprobation of our ways - and yet all this is in love! He will not caress the believer - when he is indulging in pride, worldliness, and backsliding from him; nor will he even sanction a spirit contrary to his word. Those whom he loves - he wisely corrects! He never spares the rod - to the spoiling of the child - but says, "I will correct you in measure - but will not leave you wholly unpunished." His wisdom and holiness shine in every part of his works - but in none more than in his dealings with his people. Was he less wise, we might have more comfort - but it would injure us. Was he less holy, we might have fewer trials - but we would assuredly be losers. Divine love, wisdom, and

holiness combined - drew the plan of the Christian's lot; and the same divine love, wisdom, and holiness - executes that plan.

All the wisdom of Deity, under the guidance of Almighty love - shines in our path, our portion, and our circumstances; and when we enjoy the clear light of eternity - we shall see that this was the case. O if we really believed this now - how different would be our feelings and our practices often! How quietly would we submit to every painful dispensation of divine providence; how cheerfully would we acquiesce in every intimation of our Father's will; and how readily would we take the cup he has prepared for us, and drink it saying, "The cup which my heavenly Father gives me - shall I not drink it?"

There is divine wisdom in every trial - and divine love in every cross! Holiness and wisdom in Jesus, demand that our way should at times be hedged up with thorns, that we may not find our paths. The infinite love of Jesus, shines in every painful discipline. He is no indulgent parent, no foolish friend, no unholy companion; he will not tempt us to evil, nor with evil - neither will he indulge us to our injury. He would rather close his ears to our cries - than his heart to our best interests; and the day is coming when we shall see that all our trials were needful - and not a trial could have been omitted consistently with the wisdom and holiness of his love. May his love shed abroad in my heart - lead me to love, seek and pant for holiness! May my soul daily cry: On you, O God of purity, I wait for hallowing grace;

None without holiness, shall see The glories of your face!

Lead me in all your righteous ways, Nor suffer me to slide;

Make plain your path before my face, My God, O be my guide!

O may I ne'er to evil yield, Defended from above; And kept and covered by the shield Of your Almighty love!

Christ's Love is OMNIPOTENT The love of Jesus is armed with divine power for the execution of its purposes, and the fulfillment of its designs. It will perform all its good pleasure - but in the most judicious and prudent way. Were there only power - he might drag us; but there is wisdom with power, and therefore he draws us: "I drew them with cords of love, as with the hands of a man." Divine love will not be conquered - for it is as strong as death; neither will it be trifled with - for it is the divine majesty who is loving. It could work without means - but it wisely and mercifully employs them; it could accomplish its designs at once - but it chooses to proceed by degrees. None can effectually resist its sweet omnipotence - when it is exerted; nor are any disposed to find fault - when they feel its omnipotent sweetness.

Christ's omnipotent love . . . reaches its objects, when at the greatest distance from God; raises them from the pit of destruction; plucks them as brands from the fire; delivers them from the power of darkness; and translates them into His blessed kingdom.

Christ's omnipotent love . . . restores the backslider from his wanderings; extricates the erroneous from the labyrinths of error; preserves the shipwrecked and tempest-tossed, from dashing upon the rocks of destruction; supports the traveler in his rugged way; and guides the pilgrims of Zion by its strength, to his holy habitation.

Christ's omnipotent love never varies - and it cannot fail! Every object of the love of Jesus is addressed in the language of inspiration, "The eternal God is your refuge - and underneath are the everlasting arms!" Weakness may be felt, and the soul may be ready to faint - but divine love says, "I will strengthen you! I will help you! Yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness."

We may come up out of the wilderness, leaning upon the omnipotent arm of a Savior's love (Song of Solomon 8:5), and exclaim, "Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear. God is my refuge and strength, my ever-present help in trouble. Therefore I will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging, for the Lord Almighty is with me, and the omnipotent Savior is my refuge!"

Happy, unspeakably happy - is the soul who is saved by the omnipotent love of Jesus; nothing shall by any means hurt it, while it follows in the footsteps of the lambs, feeds among his flock, and walks by his holy precepts. All the attributes of Deity surround it - all the resources of eternity are open to it - and all that God possesses, stands engaged to make it blessed! Trust then in Jesus forever, for in the love of Jesus is everlasting strength. This omnipotent Savior is so kind, so gentle, so condescending to the coming sinner - that he will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. He encourages the weakest desire, comforts the most timid spirit, and receives without upbraiding, every one who applies for his mercy! The least, the feeblest of the sheep, To him the Father give;

Kind is his heart the charge to keep, And strong his arm to save! That hand, which Heaven and earth sustains, And bars the gates of Hell, And rivets Satan down in chains, Shall guard his chosen well!

Then let the infernal lion roar, How vain his threats appear, When he can match Jehovah's power, We may begin to fear!

Christ's Love is GLORIOUS The love of Jesus embraces everything that is glorious - and must therefore be superlatively glorious! Have wisdom, riches, honor, eternity, holiness, self-sufficiency - any glory? All these in their highest perfection are found in the love of Christ. Love - wise, holy love - is the glory of a man; and the love of Christ - is the glory of Christ. Love is . . . the royal robe which covers him, the crown that adorns him, the principle that actuates him, the rule that guides him, and the perfection that brings an eternal revenue of glory to him!

All the perfections of Godhead shine and sparkle in the love of Jesus! It is . . . the sun in the firmament of the Gospel; the fountain that cheers and supplies us in this wilderness world; and the basis of our confidence in reference to another.

Nothing can raise us so high in the scale of existence - or lay us under such extensive obligations - as the love of Jesus! No language can possibly describe it, no intellect can fully conceive of it, no heart can ever contain it! The love of Jesus is as boundless as space - and more glorious than the sun in the skies! Angels admire and adore it, the godly below enjoy and seek fully to know it. An acquaintance with it brings peace! The full enjoyment of it, is Heaven! We are learning it now, and we shall enjoy it forever. The love of Jesus will . . . fill us with joy, clothe us with dignity, crown us with honor, feast us with delights, and introduce us to the fullness of God.

Holy Spirit, be pleased to give us just conceptions of this glorious subject of Christ's love; and fill us with adoration, gratitude, and zeal, while we contemplate it; and ultimately raise us to behold its glorious unfoldings and full development - in the bright abodes of blessedness above! May we . . . be changed into the same image, breathe the same spirit, walk by the same rule, aim at the same end - as did our beloved and ever-loving Lord; who though he was rich - yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might he made rich.

Jesus is indeed altogether lovely - and his love to us is wonderful, surpassing all human love. It has no parallel - because He has no equal. It stands single and alone. Like the one sun which rules by day, and the one moon which rules by night - it is alone in its glory, beauty, and grandeur! Other loves, like the distant stars, may twinkle in the twilight of evening, or sparkle in the gloom of midnight - but the glory of the love of Jesus, eclipses them all. May my reader know this love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge - and be filled with all the fullness of God!

O let me climb those higher skies, Where storms and darkness never rise!

There he displays his powers abroad, And shines and reigns the Incarnate God. Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars, Nor Heaven, his full resemblance bears; His beauties we can never trace, Until we behold him face to face!

IV. The DISPLAYS of the Love of Christ. The Display of the Love of Christ, in ETERNITY The love of Christ did not tarry for time, in order to manifest itself - but it burst forth in eternity! In eternity past, the Father blessed us in him, gave us grace in him, passed his purpose of mercy in him. In eternity past, Jesus manifested his love - by becoming the SURETY of the better covenant. He engaged . . . to be our Mediator, to take our nature, to bear our sins, to provide our righteousness, to conquer our foes, and to be the medium through which all the blessings of grace and glory should flow to us! In this character, he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning before the earth was. In the volume of the book it was written of him, to do the will of God. He engaged . . . to bruise the serpent's head, to destroy the works of the devil, and to deliver his family from the curse, and eternal damnation. His word was pledged as the proof of his love to us - and the redemption of the pledge was the confirmation of his love. He foreknew all that was needful - and offered himself as a substitute in our place. The offer was accepted - and Jesus was appointed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He truly was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world - but was manifested in these last times, for us. He was set apart as the victim, which was to be offered on the altar of divine justice, to redeem and purify unto himself a special people, zealous of good works.

Then he stood forth as our Substitute - when there was no other who could; then he displayed his love - when all was vast eternity. His eye and heart were fixed upon us then, and he said, "I will be their Substitute, I will give my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who will pluck off the hair! I will be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and be silent as a sheep before her shearers! I will bear their iniquities, and give my life a ransom for them. What the law cannot do - I will accomplish; and I will justify my people. My person shall be given for theirs; my life shall be given for theirs. I will stoop to them, labor for them, and suffer the desert of their sin! I will righteously free them from all law-claims, deliver them from Satan and the grave; and will present them to myself glorious, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!"

Thus Jesus displayed his love - before he exerted his power; thus he engaged for us - before he created us! He is in one mind - and none can turn him! O how wondrous! How stupendous the love of Jesus! To our Redeemer's glorious name Awake the sacred song!

O may his love immortal flame Tune every heart and tongue! His love - what mortal thought can reach, What mortal tongue display!

Imagination's utmost stretch In wonder dies away!

He left his radiant throne on high, Left the bright realms of bliss, And came to earth to bleed and die, Was ever love like this? The Display of the Love of Christ, in His Appearances to Old Testament Believers The love of Jesus shines forth in his appearances to the saints under the old dispensation. No sooner had Adam sinned - than Jesus appears. He comes to judge, condemn and promise. He gives a promise which includes the whole gospel, and embodies his infinite love. He raised the faith and hope of our first parents to himself, comforted their distressed minds, and proclaimed peace to their guilty bosoms.

He was a frequent visitor to our world after this; he walked with Enoch and Noah, appeared to Abraham and a multitude of others. In all of his appearances to his saints - he revealed his condescending love. He acted as Mediator under every past dispensation, and through him prayers were accepted, judgments averted, and blessings bestowed. Every mercy flowed through his hands - and every favor was granted with a reference to his divine atonement.

Thousands were saved on the credit of his engagement to atone for their sins, when the fullness of time would come - and entered Heaven to enjoy and celebrate his love. Every precious promise which was made, every prayer that was accepted, and every sacrifice that bled - proclaimed the love of Jesus! Of him the Psalmist sang, to him the priesthood pointed, and by his Spirit the prophets spoke. The whole of the Jewish economy, rightly viewed, exhibits the love of Jesus and sets forth our infinite obligations to him! In a word, every blessing and every comfort that was then enjoyed, with all the good that was anticipated, directly or indirectly - set forth the love of Christ! But for the love of Christ, our world would have been one continuous Hell - and every one of its inhabitants would have been suffering Jehovah's tremendous curse. Despair would have erected its dreadful throne upon it; darkness would have spread its horrifying wings over it; and the never-dying worm would have preyed upon every one of its miserable inhabitants!

O let us then admire the love of Jesus! From this blessed fountain, flows all our present comforts and all our future prospects! To the love of Jesus, every heaven-bound pilgrim has been indebted for every gleam of hope, for every ray of comfort, for every delightful foretaste of the glory which is to be revealed! To the love of Jesus, we shall be everlastingly indebted for all that we have - and for all that we are. Thanks, eternal thanks to Jesus - for his unspeakable love! "May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully!" Ephesians 3:19 The Display of the Love of Christ, in His INCARNATION

How wondrously did Jesus display His love - when He assumed our nature, took upon Him the form of a slave, and was found in appearance as a man! What love - to stoop so low as to . . . be conceived in a virgin's womb, be brought forth in pain, and experience all the weakness and ignorance of infancy!

Yes, He was brought forth in poverty - a stable for His birth-place, and a feeding-trough for His bed! He passed by the palaces of the noble, and the mansions of the great - yes, even the comfortable cottages of the poor - and was born in circumstances of misery and degradation! Who could have thought, if they had entered that stable and seen that infant weeping on His mother's bosom - that that infant was the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace! That all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in that little babe! That it was love - incomparable and inconceivable love, which brought Deity and humanity together in such a wonderful and indescribable union? This is the mystery of Godliness! The mystery of love! He left . . . the bright abodes of blessedness and glory, the songs of Cherubim and Seraphim, the bosom of his Father, and the infinite delights which He had eternally enjoyed - to be a worm and not a man; to be scorned and despised by all! (Psalms 22:6) He left Heaven's heights . . . to be the Savior of his flock; to be the brother of his people; to be the glorifier of his Father!

Here is love beyond measure and degree! O my soul, admire and adore!

Jesus was once a helpless infant, a feeble child; and yet, at the same moment - he was the Almighty, the self-sufficient God!

What privations He suffered, even from the very beginning of His career on earth! What pain He endured - from His birth unto His death! He went sorrowing, sighing, and groaning: from the stable - to the garden; and from the garden - to gloomy Calvary; where He . . . finished His work, proved His love, conquered His foes, delighted His Father, and merited everlasting honors and glories for His people!

Loving Savior, let me often be led to meditate on your incarnation and see the exhibition of your love in that wondrous act. In it, God becomes man - and man becomes one with God; extremes meet and are united, the person is one and is truly divine; the natures are two and are infinitely different. To worship a man - would be idolatry. To see God - would be death! Yet, now I may worship him who is man - and see him who is God - without committing sin or offering harm. O mystery of mercy! O the depth of the wisdom and love of God!

Hail, God the Son, with glory crowned, E'er time begin to be!

Throned with the Father through the round, Of vast eternity! Our feeble nature he assumes, And full of truth and grace, By his imputed work becomes, The Lord our Righteousness! To lift us from our lost estate, Behold his life-blood stream!

Hail, Lord Almighty to create!

Almighty to redeem! The Display of the Love of Christ, in His PRIVATE LIFE "Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him!" Matthew 2:13 Christ, our Wondrous Lover met with sorry reception in our guilty, ungrateful world! At first He was denied a dwelling - but soon it was determined to deprive Him of existence! O height of folly! O depth of wickedness! To attempt to murder this infant, is Deicide!

Foolish Herod! Shall divine predictions be falsified by you, and shall your lust frustrate God's eternal purpose to save His people? But Jesus must flee, his parents must employ the wise men's gifts to carry him to Egypt, and the heathen must house him whom the Israelites despised. He lived in poverty, lived by labor - in the sweat of his brow he earned his bread. Doubtless He felt

weak and wearied when returning from his daily employment, and longed for rest, even as we ourselves do. He was passed in the street without distinction, and he labored for his bread under human direction. O astonishing condescension!

He grew in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and man. He was virtue personified - a living transcript of God's holy law! He never knew a sinful desire - but was holy, harmless, and undefiled. Little did many of his companions think what he was, where he had been, what brought him into our world, or what he was come to do! He lived privately, labored assiduously, loved his people incessantly, and was employed about his Father's business. How wonderful the ways of God!

If God's own Son was a laborer, shall I murmur to be employed in a lowly job? If Jesus lives so many years unnoticed - shall I sinfully pant for distinction! Let me not listen to Satan, who would inject the thought into my mind, that if God loved me, he would deal differently with me; but let me look at Jesus and see him as a laborious carpenter, living in seclusion and suffering from privation, and let me remember that it was his love to me which was the mainspring of action in all this! Here I see love retiring, laboring, stooping! He was willing to be anything, for the benefit of his beloved people! For thirty long years, Jesus lay in concealment - his glory veiled, his honors withheld, and his love put to the trial. O my Savior, let me often have fellowship with you, and let your love constrain me to glorify your adorable name.

Lost sinner, see how low Jesus stooped, how patiently he labored, how perseveringly he toiled - that he might be able to save unto the uttermost, all who come to God by him. No other food may I desire; No other theme, my bosom fire; But sovereign, rich, redeeming love, While here, and when I dwell above. Your everlasting love I sing, The source whence all my pleasures spring, How deep it sinks! How high it flows! No saint can tell - no angel knows! The Display of the Love of Christ, in His BAPTISM and TEMPTATION When Jesus had lived in retirement and poverty, uneducated and disregarded for the space of thirty years, he came forth from his seclusion, to the Jordan to John to be baptized. He manifests his love by submitting to and ratifying this divine institution, hereby setting his people an example, that they should follow in his steps. As the great Shepherd of his people - he goes before them, inviting them to follow him. No sooner is he acknowledged as the Son of God, and presented as the example to his people, than he is led up into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil; here for the space of forty days, his body is neglected, and his soul plied with every temptation which Satan could invent. He suffered being tempted; he was tempted in all points like as we are - yet without sin. He entered experimentally into the state of his people - he learned by experience, the craft and power of our adversary; therefore he is able to support those who are tempted. He suffered - that he might sympathize; he was tempted - that he might triumph. And now, such is his love that he will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able; but he is faithful and will make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it, and eventually overcome.

O my soul, look at your Savior surrounded by the wild beasts of the desert, beset by all the powers of darkness! What brought him into the wilderness and exposed him to those foes? It was his love! And now we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are; one who can, does, and will sympathize with us; and who, having conquered himself, will make us conquerors too. My tempted Lord, help me in every hour of temptation - to flee to you and to derive encouragement from the

fact that you were tempted for forty days together, and that now you cannot, will not, be a mere spectator when your people are suffering from your foe.

Satan was foiled in the wilderness before he was foiled on the cross; and as he was conquered by our Lord - so shall he be conquered by us. But what a wondrous sight must that have been! Tell me O angels, were you not astonished! To see the Prince of Peace, assaulted by the foul tempter - the Lord of glory surrounded the hosts of Hell! The delight of God - beset by the objects of his wrath! May I never forget that Jesus stood until Satan ended all his temptation, and that the foiled enemy of my soul was obliged to withdraw, defeated.

He once temptations knew, of every sort and kind. That He might support show, To every tempted mind. In every point the Lamb was tried Like us, and then for us he died! The Display of the Love of Christ, in His PREACHING

Let us listen to the preaching of Jesus, and there we shall discover his love! He brought the learning of eternity into time - and the eloquence of Heaven to earth - that he might preach the gospel to the poor. He unfolded the gracious purposes of mercy, delivered the promises of grace, and enforced the precepts of holiness; but all was founded upon love, and enforced by love.

He opened his Father's loving heart, to disperse the sinner's doubts, and pledged his own veracity to banish the doubter's fears. He exhibited the plan of salvation, in all its glory - and pointed out the way of escape from the wrath to come, with all possible clearness. He warned the guilty; invited the weary, the thirsty, and the timid; and made the most glorious promises to every coming soul. He opened the Old Covenant, and proclaimed the New. He never sanctioned sin, nor discouraged an awakened sinner. He pitied ignorance, and bore with weakness - but never built up a soul in delusion, nor frowned the unworthy from his feet. He exhibited salvation in all its glorious freeness, holiness, and perfection; and assured all who listened to his word "That as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up;" and as the bitten Israelites were all healed by looking to that object, so every one "Who believes in him should not perish - but have eternal life;" that whoever comes to him for life, salvation, peace, and rest - he will never cast out; but will give unto them eternal life, with the assurance that they shall never perish, nor shall any pluck them out of his hands!

He proclaimed the Father's name as love; his own disposition as meek and lowly; the design of his coming into the world, that we might have life and have it more abundantly; and the Father's good pleasure in the gift of the kingdom. His preaching was suitable to our cases; in language intelligible and plain; and with the very best design, that we might have his joy fulfilled in ourselves.

Never was there such a preacher! Love was his nature, love his motive, love his message, and the exhibition of love in our present and everlasting welfare, was his end. May I ever . . . listen to his voice, receive and hold fast his words, believe all his holy declarations, trust all his precious promises, imbibe his heavenly spirit, walk by his divine precepts, and at length appear like him - when I see him as he is! O delightful anticipation - to be forever with the Lord, the fountain and fullness of love!

Jesus, great Oracle of truth, O may we learn of Thee;

Receive true wisdom from your mouth And live from error free.

You, the great Prophet of the Lord, Does heavenly doctrine preach; And by your Spirit and your word, All needful wisdom teach. By you we ever would be taught, And learn your doctrine well; And be to sweet subjection brought, As well as saved from Hell. The Display of the Love of Christ, in His MIRACLES But let us look at Christ's miracles, they are all-merciful and proclaim his love. He gives . . . sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, feet to the lame, cleansing to the leper, health to the sick, and life to the dead!

He healed all who applied to him - the multitude could not exhaust his mercy! None could baffle his skill! He blamed none for coming, nor did he send one empty away. He sympathized with the bereaved, had compassion on the hungry, and would willingly have sheltered Jerusalem beneath his wing. Every miracle he wrought . . . proclaimed his power, confirmed his word, and exhibited his mercy!

Each has a voice to invite the trembling sinner to him and to encourage the doubting soul to expect salvation from him. All say: his heart is tender, his mercy is unbounded, and his compassions are unspeakable! But his miracles upon the body are not to be compared to his miracles upon the soul. Look at the filthy Magdalene - she is now chaste, pure, and holy! Look at the covetous, extortionate Zaccheus - he is now liberal, generous, and spiritual! Look at a murdering Saul - he is now the harmless, self-denying, loving Paul! Look at millions of the vilest transgressors who were a blot upon creation, who have been guilty of crimes unfit to name - but now they are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified, they are glorified. Their natures are changed - and the lion dwells with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the kid, and the vulture nestles with the dove. Their former sins are given up, and they all seek the Lord with one consent. The lame man, leaps like a deer; the tongue of the mute, sings; in the wilderness, waters break out. Instead of the thorn bush, comes up the fir tree. Instead of the brier, comes up the myrtle tree.

Love of Jesus! be my constant subject, my daily theme. Let me find it a fountain of pleasure in this barren world; a paradise of glory on this wretched earth! Here I may . . . lose my fears, forget my sorrows, employ my thoughts, warm my heart, check my resentments, crucify my lusts, and gather fruit unto eternal life. May all the miracles of Jesus' love appear in me, in . . . the resurrection of my dead soul, the cleansing of my leprous nature, giving sight to my blind understanding, giving feet to my lame affections, giving hearing to my deaf mind, giving health to my sin-sick heart, giving purity to my depraved memory, giving food to my hungry spirit, and giving power to my poor weak will.

Reader, Jesus still possesses the same power - and he still exerts it. He has the same love - and he still displays it. He can heal you. He will heal you - if you apply to him. He never refuses to heal. No soul-disease can conquer his skill. He can give you a new heart. He can open your blind eyes. He can unstop your deaf ears. He can cure the leprosy of your soul. He can create you anew and make you a new creature. There are no limits to his power. His invitation is free and generous. He says, "Whoever will, let him come" - and he heals all who apply. Come then to Jesus. Come just as you are. Come without any delay. Come and be healed. Come and be made happy. He still says, "Him that comes - I will never cast out." From sin - the guilt, the power, the pain, You can relieve my soul;

Lord, I believe, and not in vain, For you will make me whole. The Display of the Love of Christ, in His SUFFERINGS

Let us now pass on and read the love of Jesus in the sufferings which he endured; behold and see if there ever was sorrow like unto his sorrow or sufferings like his sufferings. He brought an infinite mind to comprehend them - and an almighty nature to support them; had he been deficient here, all had failed. He was charged with the sins of his people - and was to sustain the curse of God. This curse includes everything that is fearful, dreadful, and alarming. The whole nature of Deity is employed in the execution of the curse. Every perfection of the Divine nature was insulted, and every attribute was directed against the curse-bearing Jesus.

He beheld the dreadful storm approaching, and he cried, "Now my soul is deeply troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour." He saw the bitter cup, and agonizing with God in prayer, he exclaimed, "If it is possible - let this cup pass from me." But the storm must be endured, the cup must be drank - even to the very dregs!

He felt, he drank, he fell to the ground - blood oozes through his skin, and he is baptized in purple gore! O Jesus! who shall attempt to set forth the horrors of your soul, the anguish of your pierced heart! Infinite justice smites you without mercy, and all the waves and billows of divine wrath go over you! Men come forth to charge, insult, and condemn you; and devils vent their malice upon you. Heaven, earth, and Hell - seem to unite to plunge you in bitter woe and to fill you with dreadful sorrow!

Why are you exposed to . . . the wrath of God, the rage of men, and the spite of devils? Have you injured any? O no! But you love your people - and they have. And is it love that has brought you to this? Surely it is as strong as death. Your sufferings were tremendous; your infinite intellect was filled with horror; your whole person was racked, tortured, and put to grief! Never was there such a sufferer before, nor ever such sufferings as yours! O may I read your love in every drop of blood - and hear it in every deep-fetched sigh and heart-felt groan! May I be led to comprehend with all saints - what is the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge!

Gethsemane, sacred spot! Calvary, dreadful mountain! May I dwell in meditation on the tragic scenes transacted upon you!

We'll sing the praise of him who gave His precious life for us;

'Twas wonderful at all to save- But more to do it thus!

How awful must our state have been, When nothing but his blood, Who gave us life, could make us clean, And bring us back to God. The more he suffered for our sake, The more his kindness is;

But, O! what poor returns we make, For grace and love like his! The Display of the Love of Christ, in His DEATH The love of Jesus brought him to the cross for our sakes - and justice exacted full pavement of our debt. He was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He made peace for us - by the blood of his cross. He suffered all that we deserved; and by suffering, delivered us from the wrath to come. He endured the infinite weight of divine vengeance and put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself. His death made atonement - a complete, divine and infinite atonement! He weathered the storm of divine wrath, emptied the quiver of divine justice of

all its arrows, spoiled principalities and powers, and cried, "It is finished!"

Never did his love shine so glorious as now, laden with our sins, covered with shame, cursed of God, insulted by devils, derided by men, and, forsaken by his Father - he . . . submits without a murmur, endures without repining, and dies without regret!

Behold, how he loved us! Was ever any love like his? His heart beat with affection towards us under all his dreadful sufferings! He never loved more - than when his heart ceased to beat. O my soul, look at his face - so marred, more than any man's! Look at . . . those furrowed cheeks, that wrinkled brow, those languid streaming eyes, his temples pierced and bleeding, while indescribable agonies writhe his frame - and see how he loved us!

Look at his naked form stained with blood and dirt, his strength dried up like a potsherd, a fever exhausts his vitals, and he cries. "I thirst!" See, they mock his cries and deride his dying prayers!

O miracle of mercy! O mystery of iniquity! But does anything hinder his love? No, nothing! The fountain still flows freely! Looking at his guilty, ungrateful people - he says, "How can I give you up!" He could give up his comforts, his honors, his glory, and his life - but he could not give up his people! They were entwined around his heart, incorporated as it were in his very nature. He had said, "They shall never perish!" and he will not forfeit his word or desert his charge. His love . . . brought him from Heaven, led him through life, conducted him to Gethsemane, and supported him under the horrors of Calvary.

He ceases to breathe - but continues to love; his body is a clay-cold corpse - but his love is a glowing spirit! The sepulcher encloses his body - but his love is as expansive as eternity. O may I often read the love of Jesus - in the transactions of Calvary and see how he loved his people more than his life!

Now from the garden to the cross, Let us attend the Lamb of God, Be all things else accounted dross, Compared with sin-atonement blood. With thorns his temples gored and gashed, Send streams of blood from every part; His back with knotted scourges lashed, But sharper scourges tear his heart.

Nailed naked to the accursed wood, Exposed to earth and Heaven above, A spectacle of wounds and blood, A prodigy of injured love!

5. The Love of Christ Set Forth by His RELATIONS.

Jesus is a FATHER to His Redeemed People

Jesus has revealed Himself as a Father to His people. Having begotten them again unto a living hope - He treats them as His children, and deals with them as a wise, kind, and tender parent. He cares for them - and bids them cast all their cares upon Himself. He has promised to provide for them - and encourages them to expect all necessary blessings from himself. They occupy His attention and engage His mind every moment! He dwells among them and calls them His dear children. He expresses Himself most tenderly, and acts most wisely toward them. He . . . corrects their errors, instructs their minds, feeds their souls, and guides their feet; but all in his own way. No earthly father can take the interest of his children, which Jesus takes in His people, or make such provision for them as He has made. All things pertaining to the present life are secured to them -

along with a boundless inheritance beyond the grave! He bids them to enjoy what He has given them and offers them Himself as a constant feast. He invites them to tell Him all their troubles - and promises deliverance. He invites them to make known their grievances - that He may remedy them. He invites them to make known their needs - that He may supply them. He never allows them to be out of His sight - nor out of his mind. The language of the prodigal's father to his elder son may be applied to them, "Son, you are ever with Me, and all I have is yours!"

O believer, what a privilege is yours! Jesus is not only your Friend - but your Father! He loves you, cares for you, and provides for you as such! Trust in Him at all times, depend on His care when everything around distresses you, and look to His loving heart when creatures are cruel and unkind.

You have a Father in Heaven - if you have none upon earth! You have a heavenly Father with you - if your earthly father should forsake you. As a Father, Jesus loves you naturally, individually, eternally; dwell upon his paternal relation to beget love to him in return. He says, "I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters! I will not leave you orphans - I will come unto you! I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me! Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!"

Jesus, who reigns above, we call, Our Father and our Friend;

And, blessed thought, his children all Shall see him in the end!

Though now dispersed, the day will come, When he who made them his, Will take them hence, and bear them home, To see him as he is!

How sweet to hear him say at last, You blessed children come! The days of banishment are past, Your Father calls you home!

Jesus is a HUSBAND to His Redeemed People

Jesus presents himself unto us as the Bridegroom of our souls; he says, "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord!" He here promises to bring us into the nearest union possible, for the husband is commanded to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and it is declared, "The two will become one flesh." He becomes one with us. He says, "I will be for you, and you shall be for me; I will be your portion - and you shall be my possession."

He manifests his beauties to attract us, he sends his Spirit to prepare us, he gives his sweet gospel to allure us, he puts forth his power and draws us and then makes himself over to us in an everlasting covenant.

He calls us by every sweet appellation, as "My beloved, My dove, My sister, My darling, My flawless one, My delight, My spouse!" (Song of Solomon 5:2) And he says, "I will come unto you and make my abode with you." He gives us His unsearchable riches, His person, and a share in His eternal glories and honors. He loves us most tenderly, constantly, and prudently. He assures us he will never leave us, that he will come and commune with us, and withhold no good thing from us. He says, "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has

compassion on you!" "No weapon formed against you shall prosper. For your Maker is your husband - the Lord Almighty is his name!" "As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride - so will your God rejoice over you! I will take delight in my people!"

What love is here! Can Jesus delight in such worms? Can he rejoice over such unworthy creatures? And can he enter into a marriage contract with such depraved beings? Yes! He loved his Church and gave himself for it! He has redeemed it unto himself by his blood and will everlastingly rejoice over it to bless it and honor it.

Jesus, the heavenly lover, gave His life, my wretched soul to save!

Resolved to make His mercy known, He kindly claims me for His own!

Lost in astonishment, I see Jesus, Your boundless love to me! With sin and self, I freely part, And gladly yield to You, my heart!

Jesus is a BROTHER to His Redeemed People

Jesus displays his love by becoming our Brother: "Since the children have flesh and blood - he too shared in their humanity." "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy - are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says: I will declare your name to my brothers."

Jesus is a Brother born for adversity - a Brother who has espoused the cause of the whole family, and is determined to raise them from poverty, degradation, and woe - to eternal riches, honors, and blessedness. He is a Brother who has no terror in his countenance, no pride in his nature, no unkindness in his heart. He acknowledges, relieves, and loves all his poor relations. He bids us to come boldly to him and ask largely of him - to live entirely dependent upon him. He has an infinite fullness and says, "It is all at your service!"

He is such a Brother as Joseph - who saved his family from death, raised them to honor, and forgave all their offences. Who would fear to approach a kind, tender-hearted, loving brother? And shall we fear to approach Jesus? Who would not be happy in having such a brother as Joseph? And shall not we be happy, who are the brethren of Jesus? Who would not think themselves honored by being related to a kind, wise, righteous, universally beloved Monarch? And shall not we think ourselves honored in being related to Jesus? All who rightly know him - love him supremely.

Heaven is filled with his praise. He has gone to Heaven as our Brother, and before he ascended, he said to us, "I ascend unto my Father - and your Father; and to my God - and your God." "My brethren," he says, "are those who hear the word of God - and keep it."

O believer, ever bear in mind that Jesus is your Brother; that he is not ashamed to own you, even before his Father's throne! When he lived on earth abased, Friend of sinners was his name;

Now above all glory raised, He rejoices in the same!

Still he calls them brethren, friends, And to all their needs attends. Could we bear from one another, What He daily bears from us?

Yet this glorious friend and brother Loves us, though we treat him thus!

Though for good we render ill, He accounts us brethren still.

VI. The Love of Christ, as set forth by His OFFICES Jesus is our ADVOCATE and COUNSELOR

Every believer has a powerful, crafty, and malignant foe who tempts him to sin - and then turns to be his accuser before God. Satan uses every means to lead the Christian into sin, and under condemnation; and this might easily be done - but that Jesus is his Advocate with the Father and ever lives to plead his cause. "If any man sins - we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous!" 1 John 2:1 Jesus is our wise and eloquent Advocate, he has undertaken our cause, he lives in Heaven for our sakes; our enemies are considered his enemies, and our well-being is the great object he has in view.

All the glory of his person and the perfection of his work is thrown into his plea; he pleads . . . the Father's love, his own blood, the promises of grace, and the weakness of his people; and so pleading he must prevail.

Divine justice listens with satisfaction to his voice, and Satan quails beneath the power of his arguments. All Heaven is attentive when he speaks, and acquittance always follows his pleading. He stands at the right hand of the poor sinner, to save him from those who condemn his soul.

He advocates our cause above, and gives counsel below; he says, "I will teach you and instruct you in the way which you shall go. I will counsel you, and my eyes shall be upon you." His people have fled to him under the greatest difficulties, and have received counsel which has delivered them from the greatest perplexities. He is always in office for us - and always at liberty to listen to us. He counseled Moses - and Israel was delivered from Egypt. He counseled Gideon - and the Midianites were overthrown. Saints in every age have found the benefit of his counsel and his care.

What ails you, poor tried believer? Flee to your Advocate and Counselor! He is a wonderful Counselor! He never mistakes a case, despises a poor client, or charges a fee! He leads princes away defeated, disappoints the devices of the crafty, and makes their judges fools. He possesses . . . all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; all the kindness of sinless humanity, and all the love of Deity!

What a wonderful lover is Jesus! He assumes any office, stoops to any service, and fills any relation - so that he may but do his people good and manifest his love unto them. My soul, employ this Advocate, repair to this Counselor in every season of difficulty, and follow his advice in every circumstance and situation. He is too wise to err - and too good to be unkind!

Look up my soul, with cheerful eye, See where the great Redeemer stands; The glorious Advocate on high, With precious incense in his hands!

He sweetens every humble groan, He recommends each broken prayer;

Recline your hope on him alone, Whose power and love forbid despair.

Teach my weak heart, O gracious Lord With stronger faith to call you mine;

Bid me pronounce the blissful word, MY FATHER GOD, with joy divine.

Jesus is our KING and LAWGIVER The Lord Jesus Christ is the sole Lord and Lawgiver of his Church - hence it is called His Kingdom. All his laws proceed from his loving heart - and are framed with a view to his people's good, and his own glory. They are all merciful, just, and necessary. They cannot be dispensed with - but his glory must be obscured, and his people injured.

Jesus reigns over his people, he reigns in them, he reigns for them! He reigns . . . over them by his word and servants, in them by his grace and Spirit, for them by his wise and holy providence.

He can do as he will - for his power is absolute!

He will do as he has said - for his faithfulness is unimpeachable!

Every being in creation, is under his eye - and every movement in the universe, is by his power and permission. Nothing is too insignificant for him to regard. Nothing is too cunning to escape his all-penetrating eye! Hell is naked before him - and sin has no covering. He does according to his will in Heaven, earth, and Hell! He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers! He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing! He remains King forever! His people are bound to obey him - on the ground of his right to them; they are allured to obedience - by his love for them. They love his person, his government, his laws, and his subjects! Whatever the sovereign King does - pleases all his redeemed people. He has given his laws to them, and he executes the laws for them. He keeps his court among them, throws open his royal residence to them, and invites them to come boldly to his throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. He . . . stretches out his arm to help them, sends his ambassadors to them, employs his angels for them, and pledges himself to do them good with his whole heart and with his whole soul. He has a hedge about their habitations, a guard about their persons, and an eye over all their concerns. He condescends to hold converse with the lowest of his people - and personally listens to all their complaints. He counts their enemies as his enemies - and deals well with those who favor their righteous cause. He . . . holds out his scepter to the rebel, speaks peace to the confessing penitent, and pardons the traitor who seeks his forgiveness.

He maintains his dignity, majesty, right, and glory - and yet he manifests the greatest possible condescension, humility, love, and readiness to serve his saints. He is the omnipotent Lord God - and he reigns and rules over all! "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns!" Revelation 19:6
Jesus is our GREAT HIGH PRIEST

"Such a high priest meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens!" As a Priest, he offered up himself a sacrifice to God - for the sins of his people. His divinity constituted the golden altar - and his humanity the bleeding victim. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He has carried his blood into the holiest of all, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The worth of his sacrifice 's infinite, the merit of it is eternal. The fountain he has opened - completely cleanses from all sin! The sacrifice he has offered - forever satisfies divine justice on behalf of his people. He is still in office for us, offering up his much sweet incense (prayers) on our account. His blood is our plea; his sacrifice is the foundation of our hope. His priesthood is a never-failing source of

consolation and joy. He represents us and officiates for us - and the Father reckons all the merit of his oblation, to our account. He is a Priest that exactly suits us, because he can have compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are going astray. He is faithful as well as merciful; he deals justly with God - and graciously with man. He ever lives and abides a

Priest continually. His continuance in the Priestly office should comfort us under all our heart-breakings, short-comings, and deadness in prayer and praise; his blood will be heard for us - when we are ashamed of our pleading for ourselves! My soul, keep your eye on Jesus whenever you approach the divine Majesty; he is your Priest, his blood is your plea, and his name and office are all your confidence.

Poor sinner, are you distressed in your approaches to God on account of your unworthiness, barrenness, wanderings, and coldness? Remember, Jesus stands between you and the divine throne! He appears as a Priest for you - let this encourage you. He looks upon Christ, and is well pleased with all who approach him through Jesus. He loves to hear us plead our Savior's name - and to see us trust on his atoning blood.

O the love of Jesus as our Priest!

He offered himself for us, he gives himself to us, he officiates before the throne to do us good, and he will never cease blessing us! Where high the heavenly temple stands, The house of God not made with hands, A great High Priest our nature wears The Advocate of man appears.

He who for men their surety stood, And poured on earth his precious blood, Pursues in Heaven his mighty plan, The Savior and the Friend of man. With boldness, therefore, at your throne, O Lord, we make our sorrows known;

O let your mercy and your power, Save us in every trying hour!

Jesus is our PROPHET and TEACHER When Nicodemus came to our Lord, he said, "We know that you are a teacher sent from God, for no man can do these miracles which you do, unless God is with him."

Jesus in love to us became our teacher - and he still fills this office now. He taught orally in the days of his flesh, and many of his lessons of wisdom are still upon record - for our instruction, edification, and comfort. He taught by his example and said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." He poured light upon the benighted intellect - and grace into the polluted heart. He . . . unfolded the doctrines of sovereign grace, proclaimed the promises of reigning mercy, and delivered the precepts of holiness and love.

He brought life and immortality to light. He drew back the curtain of futurity - and predicted what would befall the world and his beloved Church, until the end of time. Time has proved the verity of much that he delivered, and is hastening to establish the rest.

He still teaches by his Spirit - the Holy Paraclete comes in his name and teaches the objects of his love. They are taught to know . . . themselves, what sin is, and the method of salvation by Christ Jesus. The Spirit's teaching . . . commences in the heart, appears in the life, and will be crowned with perfect holiness.

He teaches us . . . to hate what is evil - and to forsake what is sinful; to approve things that are excellent - and to follow after holiness.

All who are taught by him . . . cleave unto him, forsake all to follow him, and are ever desirous to know more of him.

They all sit at his feet, and receive his words. They all reverence, believe, love, and obey his written word; but they cannot be satisfied without his divine communications and heart-hallowing instructions. They cry out with holy ardor and earnestness, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!" And he, ever gracious, as their Teacher, replies, "I will teach you and instruct you in the way which you shall go. I will guide you with my eye. I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way which you should go."

Gracious Jesus, ever be the teacher of my soul, teach me . . . to imitate your example, to breathe your spirit, to love your gospel, to cleave to your saints, to avoid every evil, and to follow on to know the Lord!

Surely every believer will say, Amen and Amen.

Behold the prophet of the Lord, Promised to Israel's race;

Makes known Jehovah's heavenly word, And brings to light his grace.

Jesus, the life and light of man, His quickening truth imparts;

Ordained to teach before time began Instructs and cheers our hearts!

Taught by the Prophet sent from God, We run the heavenly way; The path which Christ has marked and trod Will lead to endless day!

Jesus is our SHEPHERD

"I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me. I lay down My life for My sheep!" John 10:14-15 Jesus is the loving Shepherd of His chosen flock. He knows His sheep - and loves them too. He knows . . . their names, their persons, their abodes, their needs, their enemies, and their desires. Their names are engraved on His heart, and on the palms of His hands. He came into the world that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. He gave his life as a ransom price for them. He says, "I lay down My life for My sheep."

He gathers them by his Gospel - and Spirit and feeds and enfolds them in little flocks below. He gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young. He feeds them in green pastures, and causes them to lie down beside the still waters. He protects them from the roaring lion, the raging bear, and the devouring wolf! He says, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish - ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand!"

Jesus . . . restores them when they wander; heals them when they are sick; cleanses them when they are filthy; changes their pasture whenever they need it; watches over them every moment; and guards them day and night, so that no one may harm them.

He leads them - and they follow Him . . . knowing His voice, loving His person, and obeying His commands.

He is now engaged in preparing pasture for them above - where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary shall forever rest! He will come again and receive them unto Himself, that where He is - His sheep may be also.

He loves them too well to forget them, and is too concerned for them to neglect them. He never takes His eyes off them! This tender Shepherd listens to the bleating of the feeblest of His lambs - and sympathizes with the weakest of His flock. He has promised to feed them, and lead them to fountains of living waters - and to cause sorrows and sighing to flee away forever. His presence shall be with them, when they pass through the dark valley of the Shadow of Death, and His rod and His crook shall comfort them. His strength shall be made perfect in the weakness of His lambs, His wisdom shall shine in the way He conducts them, and His love will be displayed in every part of His conduct towards them!

Lambs of Jesus! Listen to your Shepherd's voice, keep close to your Shepherd's side, and aim to honor your dear Shepherd's name!

Beneath my Savior's watchful eye, I own my Shepherd's care; My needs indulgent to supply, His pastures, he'll prepare.

He bids me feed, and he makes me rest, Where fields in verdure grow; My soul, when weary, is refreshed, Where streams of mercy flow.

Goodness and mercy so divine, Shall bless my future days:

Until, in his house above, I join Their everlasting praise!

Jesus is our PHYSICIAN

Sin not only brings us under condemnation - but it assumes the character of a disease! It has infected the whole soul, and spoiled every faculty. The whole head is sick - the whole heart is faint. There is no soundness in us. We need healing - as well as pardon. Jesus, in the greatness of his love, provides for both. He becomes not only our Redeemer - but our Physician. He employs His Spirit, His Word, and His Providence - to bring us to a healthy state.

He lays open the wound to our view - and then applies His own most precious blood to heal it! He makes us to feel our sickness - and then bestows His grace to restore us to health. All healing is by His skill - and through His Spirit, grace, blood, and Word. He is the maker of the Balm of Gilead - and He is the Physician there.

He undertakes the healing of all who apply to Him! He never yet failed in any case! He heals all gratuitously. His wisdom shines in the management of every case - and also His skill in healing the most desperate and alarming cases. He acts so kindly and tenderly to all His patients, and heals so judiciously - that He wins the heart of every patient - and all are delighted with His skill.

Thousands throng Him - but not one is overlooked or neglected by Him. He is always at His office, and ready to heal. He loves to see His poor, helpless, suffering patients come - and always greets them with a hearty welcome. The plague of the heart, the plague of the head, weakness in the

hands, feebleness in the knees, blindness, deafness, leprosy, and disease in every form - are easily removed by Him.

Before Him . . . the lame man leaps like an deer, the tongue of the dumb sings, broken hearts rejoice, and the blind see out of darkness and out of obscurity. This process of healing is on-going - none are completely healed at present. And when they are healthy enough - they are sent from the hospital below - to paradise above! Every patient who is healed - is provided with a mansion above, and has a title to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. There the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick," and the people who dwell there are forgiven their iniquities!

All His patients feel and manifest the symptoms of returning health - which are love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, etc. But none of them rest satisfied with any symptoms; they all visit His office frequently, asking Him to complete the cure. And such is His love, kindness, and grace - that He assures them all who have a good work begun in them - that He will complete it in the day of His glorious appearing!

Jesus is a wise Physician, Skillful and exceeding kind;

Through him sinners find remission, And enjoy sweet peace of mind.

Moved with tenderest compassion, He relieves the wounded heart; And the richest consolation, By his spirit does impart.

Whatever your condition, Sinner, Jesus' word is sure;

He the skillful, kind Physician, Will effect a perfect cure!

Jesus is our MEDIATOR and SURETY No sinner can see Deity and live, or approach God without a mediator. No one could be a mediator, unless he were infinitely holy and inflexibly just. He must be just toward God, and just toward man - holy in all his dealings in reference to both. He must be God to deal with God - and man to deal with man. God must have all he demands - and man must have all he needs; and the mediator must find the whole, or his office would be useless.

Herein the love of Jesus shines with peculiar glory: he assumes our nature, that he may possess both; he engages that God shall have all his rights - and man shall have all that he needs. Jesus engages that every perfection of the divine nature shall be glorified in the salvation of sinners. He, as their Surety . . . comes in their nature, takes their place, pays their debts, opens their prisons, blots out all charges, entitles them to eternal life, fits them for glory, uses them in his service, and honors them in an astonishing way.

He leads them to God by his Spirit, and is the mediator before God in his complex person. He is the medium through which all spiritual blessings come to them - and through which all their prayers, praises, and services come up accepted before God. He reconciled them to God by his death; and all the perfections of God are agreed in their salvation. He is the Surety of the better covenant engaged to call, sanctify, and save all whom the Father has given him; hence his admirable language, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

Christians are said to be the called by Jesus Christ. Peter assures the Church, that Christ had according to his divine power, given her all things that pertain to life and godliness. He made our peace by his blood, and he maintains peace by his intercession. He is the mediator between us offending creatures - and our often insulted God. All the glories of his person, all the fullness of his merit, all the perfection of his work, all the prevalence of his intercession - is between us and God. Through him we have access by the Spirit unto the Father - yes, we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

O what love the Savior manifests to his people! He is still the meeting-place of God and man. This should . . . chase away our fears, encourage confidence, produce gratitude, and fill us with thankfulness! And how sweet is the idea, even at death we shall come before God through Christ; he will be our mediator then; and at length as our Surety he will present us blameless to the Father!

Within the holy place above, Covered with meritorious scars, The tokens of his dying love, Our great High priest in glory bears.

He pleads his passion on the tree, He shows himself to God for me.

Before the throne my Savior stands, As Mediator he appears; My name is graven on his hands, And him the Father always hears:

While low at Jesus' cross I bow, He bears the blood of sprinkling now.

Jesus is our SAVIOR "You are to give him the name JESUS, because he will save his people from their sins!" Matthew 1:21 The title, Savior, includes all the Lord Jesus has done, is doing, or will do for his people. It supposes that the people were sinners, and that Jesus came forth to deliver them.

He saves them from wrath - to the enjoyment of everlasting love.

He saves them from sin, misery, and disgrace - to holiness, happiness, and honor.

He gave himself for them - and they became his.

He gives himself to them - and he becomes theirs.

He closes the gates of Hell before them - and opens the gates of Heaven to them.

He saves them . . . from eternal death - by regenerating grace; from bondage to sin - by the Spirit of adoption; from guilt of sin - by the application of his blood; from soul-damning error - by the revelation of his truth; from the wiles of Satan - by the power of his arm; from the power of sin - by imparted holiness; from the condemnation of sin - by imputed righteousness; and from the present evil world - by a living faith in his word and work.

He saves them freely - without anything in them to induce him.

He saves them fully - without anything of theirs being added to his work.

He eternally - notwithstanding the opposition by earth and Hell.

He saves them by grace - through believing, to the praise of his glorious grace.

He gives them . . . the life, by which they live; the light, in which they see; the holiness, in which they shine; the righteousness, in which they are justified; the wisdom, by which they walk; the strength, in which they work and fight; the food, on which they exist; the Spirit, to manage their affairs; and Heaven, at the end of their race.

Thus he is their complete Savior!

He saves them by his own merit, power, grace, and resources, alone. He is all in all in this glorious work. Salvation . . . originated in the love of his heart, was secured by the merit of his blood, and is completed by the power of his arm. The sinner was given into his hands by the Father, for this purpose; and every believer gives up himself into the hands of Jesus with the same design. His name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins. "He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works - but according to his own purpose and grace." Our salvation from first to last, is wholly of love, of the love of Jesus! "Who loved us - and gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a special people zealous of good works."

We are saved . . . in him, as our city of refuge; by him, as our glorious Redeemer; and for him, as our God and Father.

He is the author and finisher of our salvation - the Alpha and Omega in the work; and to him we shall forever sing, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power - be unto him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever! Amen." The Savior! O what endless charms.

Dwell in this blissful sound! Its influence every fear disarms. And spread sweet comfort round.

Here pardon, life, and joys divine, In rich effusion flow, For guilty rebels lost in sin, Arid doomed to endless woe! On you alone my hope relies, Beneath your cross I fall; My lord, my life, my sacrifice, My Savior, and my all!

Jesus is our JUDGE But Jesus is our Judge as well as our Savior, for "God has appointed a day in which he will judge the secrets of men, by that man whom he has appointed." The Father judges no man - but has committed all judgment unto the Son. Every one of us must give account of himself to him. Jesus will judge us in order to reward us, and he will reward every one of us according to his works, or according to the deeds done in the body. He saves us by his grace, brings us back to his authority, requires our obedience, and promises to reward the same.

Herein we see his love - not a kind act toward a brother in Christ passes unnoticed, not a good work - shall be forgotten when he comes to judge in righteousness, but every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor. The diligent, self-denying Christian shall be signally honored in the presence of the whole assembly of the upright, by the righteous Judge himself. He will judge us according to his word - and honor us according to our works. The judgment will prove the holiness of the economy of God; as a title to Heaven will forever illustrate his grace. Then every ransomed immortal will discover what is now overlooked by too many: that in the grand scheme of redemption, Jehovah has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; that his gospel never did sanction sloth or offer an excuse for idleness - but that holiness was as imperatively required as grace was unequivocally displayed; that the provision of grace was not only intended to remedy man's needs - but was also to be used to God's glory; and that present

conduct had to do with future prospects.

If we complain of inability, we are pointed to the fullness provided in Christ, and are told that God gives liberally and upbraids not. We are exhorted to have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; and we are assured in unmistakable language, that Jesus will come to take account of his servants; that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and receive according to the deeds done in the body; that whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap; that he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts - and then shall every man have praise from God; that whatever good thing any man does - the same, shall receive of the Lord. The love of Jesus will not allow him to overlook the zeal, diligence, self-denial, and activity of his children; all will be considered and rewarded; for he comes "to give reward unto his servants, and to those who fear his name, small and great."

Think, O my soul, you must appear, And pass the judgment at his bar;

What now does God and conscience say? Will you find mercy in that day? The wicked tremble, saints rejoice;

One dreads, the other loves his voice; The wicked fear, believers sing, The coming of their Judge and King!

VII. The Love of Christ, Set Forth by His CHARACTERS Jesus is our GUIDE and LEADER The path to Heaven is difficult, and the way is rough - but Jesus displays his love by becoming our Leader and our Guide. The Father introduces him to our notice with "Behold, I have given him for a Leader to the people." He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

He leads us out of self - to trust in his righteousness and atoning death, for present peace and eternal glory. We renounce self and altogether deny it, desiring to be found in him - living, dying, and forever.

He leads us out of the present evil world - unfitting us for its company, its vanities, and its pleasures; and we become dead to the world and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

He leads us from all false refuges and false dependences - and conducts us to the rock of ages; here we find a shelter from the stormy blast, a foundation on which to rest our hopes, and a defense against all our foes.

He leads us to the throne of grace - and enables us to pour out our hearts before God as our Father and our Friend. We feel at home in the presence of the Eternal, and have boldness before heart-searching Deity.

He leads us to his cross - and shows us our salvation there. We see sin removed by it, and Heaven and eternal glory opened to our view. Such glory shines in the cross when led to it by Jesus, that we readily exclaim with the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

He leads us to the green pastures of his Word - and we feed upon the sweet and plentiful provision made for his people's needs. Here we find all manner of precious fruits, new and old, laid up for

our refreshment, solace, and enjoyment.

He leads in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; he causes those who love him to inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. He may lead us into a wilderness - but he will conduct us safely out of it. He may bring us into unexpected difficulties - but he will guide us safely through. He will lead us through all the mazes and intricate paths of life - and guide us by his strength to his holy habitation. He will not lead us into difficulty - and leave us; or guide us into danger - and forsake us; but he will lead us right and bring us through; and every believer may sing, "This God is my God forever and ever! He will be my guide even unto and even through death!"

Jesus is our FRIEND The Christian is frequently called to part with beloved friends and endeared relations. Sometimes they are removed by death or distance - but at other times, they become alienated in consequence of his ardent attachment to his glorious Savior. The bonds of friendship are broken, and the ties of relationship are disregarded; the father is the persecutor of his son, and the mother the opposer of her daughter. But under these circumstances, Jesus manifests His love - as the Friend of His people. He . . . fills every relation to them, performs every kind office for them, and comforts them with divine consolations.

He invites them to pour their griefs into His bosom - and tell out all their troubles before Him. He holds communion with them - and indulges them to converse with Him as a man with his friend. He encourages them by assurances of his love - and fortifies them by promises of His presence. "Fear not," He says, "for I am with you! Be not dismayed, I am your God! I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you! Yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness." His power, His riches, His wisdom, and His Spirit - are devoted to their best interests, and employed for their present and everlasting welfare. He watches over them in tender love - and listens to them with compassionate concern.

He is a friend who loves at all times - a brother born for adversity. His love, in its immutability, fullness, and perfection - is the great bulwark of their safety; and His friendship - is the joy of their hearts. He sticks closer than a Brother, and never will fail or forsake the soul that trusts in Him.

He performs all the kind offices of friendship . . . in sickness and health; in plenty and poverty; in life and death.

He has Heaven and earth at His command - as the friend of the defenseless soul. He has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge - as the companion of the ignorant and fearful.

He calls His people friends - and presents Himself to them as their friend for their comfort, confidence, and joy.

O how the love of Jesus shines in His friendship! As our friend, He . . . lived in our world, suffered in our place, died in our stead, rose as our representative, and ascended to Heaven, where He continually makes intercession for us!

He acknowledges I am an undeserving vile worm - yet calls me His friend! He knows the worst parts of my character - and yet He says, "You are mine! I have chosen you - and will not cast you away!" He is the Friend who loves at all times!

"Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:16 A Friend there is - your voices join, You saints to praise his name! Whose truth and kindness are divine Whose love's a constant flame! When most we need his helping hand, This Friend is always near; With Heaven and earth at his command.

He waits to answer prayer. His love no end or measure knows, No change can turn its course;

Immutably the same, it flows From one eternal source!

Jesus is our REFINER and PURIFIER

"I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering!" Isaiah 48:10 The love of Jesus will not preserve His people from trials - but rather, assures them of trials! All whom He loves - He chastens! He has a furnace to purge our dross, and refine our souls. His Word and the Spirit reveal to us our defilement and impurity - and His grace and providence co-operate to remove them. "I am the Lord God, who sanctifies you."

It is divine love which . . . prepares the furnace, kindles the flame, brings the Christian into it, superintends the whole process, and brings him out as gold, seven times purified!

"From all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you!" He cleanses them in the laver of the Word by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. But He also cleanses them by a variety of afflictive dispensations, through which He causes them to pass. Our sin calls for trials - His love sends them! Our nature repines at trials - but grace submits to them! Our corruption is enraged at trials - but the Spirit sanctifies them to our good, and our Savior's glory.

He makes His people choice ones - in the "furnace of affliction!" He says, He makes His people choice ones - in the "furnace of affliction!" He says, "I will put you into the fire - and will purely purge away your dross."

Believer, never repine at your trials, nor be over-anxious for their removal. They are appointed by Jesus as your Purifier - and are choice blessings in disguise!

Seek their sanctification, wrestle with God that you may see His love in every stroke, and look to Jesus that you may enjoy His presence when passing through the flame!

Nothing can hurt you - while Jesus is near you; and He is never nearer to you - than when you are in the furnace! For He sits right there as the Refiner . . . watching the process, regulating the heat, and waiting to effect a gracious deliverance - when the ends of His love are answered.

He is only preparing you for fresh manifestations of His glory - and fitting you for larger communications of His love. In the furnace, you will lose nothing that is worth keeping - but you will obtain what is truly valuable! The flesh and the soul need constant cleansings - for corruption is so deeply rooted in our nature, that it takes a long and painful process to purge it out! But in reference to the furnace, your Lord says, "The Lord did this to purge Israel's wickedness, to take away all her sin!"

Father, make good your word of grace, And purify your chosen race, That we may in your image shine.

Out of our hearts, the dross remove. Our worldly care, and worldly love, As silver and as gold, refine.

Jesus is our MASTER

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard." Matthew 20:1

Jesus is the gracious Master of His people. He is represented as going forth to hire them into His service. He first . . . releases them from prison, delivers them from bondage, bestows upon them His Spirit, feeds them with His Word, makes them His sons, and then employs them in His service.

He gives to each gifts, or talents - suited to the place they are to occupy and the work they are to do. He commands them to labor . . . in His strength, according to His holy Word, depending on His providence for supplies, with a view to His glory.

He accepts their well-meant efforts - however feeble.

He pardons their failings and infirmities - however great.

He never commands them to make bricks without straw - but He has provided all that is necessary for His servants, and has promised freely to bestow in answer to prayer. He looks at the desire and will and assures us, "That if there is a willing mind and heart - it is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not." His service is perfect freedom - and the very labor an honor! Yet he has promised that when He comes - that He will reward all of His servants, and every act of obedience.

He is sovereign in his appointing individual gifts and services to His servants.

He is always present with His servants, inspecting their motives and their work.

He is absolute Master - no servant having liberty to object, repine, or reply! But He is also infinitely gracious, so that the rightly-instructed mind finds no reason to complain. He loves all of His servants - and in love, appoints them their places and employment. He . . . pities their weakness, regards their petitions, and answers their prayers.

He uses sovereign authority - but He uses it in wisdom and love. He so regulates His concerns - that our employments and our enjoyments are connected together: in fulfilling the one - we possess the other.

Every servant is bound to obey - and is made willing to obey. He will not dispense with the services of any Christian - all are alike under His sovereign authority, though all are not employed equally as publicly or so honorably. He loves all alike, He has redeemed all alike, and He has quickened all alike; but their places and employments differ according to His sovereign pleasure.

He sanctions every humble effort for His honor - and crowns the feeblest of His servants with an imperishable diadem! He promises them mansions - when they have finished their work; and a share in His glory - when they have ended their days!

He set them an example, when He washed the feet of his disciples; and commanded them to act toward each other - as He had acted toward them.

Servants of Jesus, keep your eye and your heart upon your Master! Aim always at His honor! Seek His glory in all things - and glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life are yours!

Christ shed his precious blood, To make us his alone; And washed in that atoning flood, We are no more our own!

If he his will reveal, Let us obey the call;

Assured, whatever the flesh may feel, His love deserves it all.

Then let us keep in view His glory, as our end;

Too much we cannot bear, or do, For such a gracious Friend!

Jesus is our DELIVERER

"I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay!" Psalms 70:5

How frequently are we poor Christians involved in dangers and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves! Surrounded as we are by enemies and evils - this can be no wonder. But how are we to be delivered? To whom are we to look for relief and rescue? To Jesus alone, who is emphatically "The Deliverer!"

He has power - and will exert it!

He has wisdom - and will employ it!

He has merit - and will apply it, for the deliverance of all who call upon Him to do it.

He delivers . . . from sin, from Satan, from dangers, from damnation.

He delivers . . . freely, frequently, and effectually.

He has delivered . . .

Joseph from the evil designs of his brethren, David from the hand of Saul, Daniel from the lions, and multitudes in every age, from eternal Hell.

He delivers from all evils - and from the most determined foes!

David celebrated his delivering mercy when he sang, "For you, O Lord, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling - that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living!" Psalms 116:8-9

Paul expresses his gratitude and his confidence in his deliverer, "He who has delivered, and does deliver - in him I trust, that he will yet deliver me. The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, and I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"

How sweetly encouraging is this - to view Jesus as our present deliverer in every season of trouble, and in all circumstances of danger - to know that he is ready to arise for our rescue, and appear for our deliverance. What need we to fear? Why should we indulge our gloomy

apprehensions? He has already conquered every foe, and whenever he appears - all flee before his face. There is . . . such majesty in his countenance, such terror in his frown, and such love in his heart toward his people - that whenever he appears on their behalf - all their enemies melt away like snow, and depart as a midnight dream.

O gracious Deliverer of your people, deliver my soul from . . . the power of sin, the influence of the world, the force of temptation, the natural tendency of trouble, the deceitfulness of my own heart, and the designs of all my foes!

Keep me by your mighty power, through faith, unto salvation!

Deliver your people from error, from worldliness, from indifference in your ways, and disregard of your word! Make them humble and holy; zealous and devout; upright and active - to show forth your praise.

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!" Psalms 18:2

"He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge - who subdues peoples under me!" Psalms 144:2 VIII. The Love of Christ as Set Forth by FIGURES Jesus is our WAY "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me!" John 14:6 When Adam sinned - all mankind wandered far from God, and lost all will and ability to return. Sin has made a great gulf between man and God, over which mere human nature can never pass.

Jesus has revealed himself as a way over this gulf - as a way into the presence of the Father; no man can come unto the Father, but by him. He conducts from a state of sin - to a state of holiness; from threatened wrath - to eternal love and happiness. The soul that ventures upon him - passes from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation.

Jesus is a way which brings honor to all Jehovah's perfections - and puts man in possession of every blessing which he needs.

Jesus is an open way - free for all comers. However vile and unworthy they may have been - they are welcome to enter, pass on, and be saved.

Jesus leads us directly to God, making us acceptable through his own glorious righteousness and precious blood; and Jehovah, for his sake, forgives us all trespasses.

Jesus is a living way, quickening all those who walk therein and enabling them to go from strength to strength, until they appear in Heaven before God.

Jesus is a safe way - there is nothing to fear, no real cause for alarm; while walking here, nothing can by any means hurt us - all things work together for our good.

Jesus is the divinely appointed way. God is well-pleased with all who come to him through Jesus. He appointed Jesus to be the way of access, he reveals him as such by his gospel to sinners, and he welcomes all who walk therein. Justice is satisfied with every traveler who goes on this road - and mercy delights to bless them. This way is stored with all necessary provision, and no good thing is withheld from those who choose this path. God meets and blesses them; Jesus unfolds

the riches of his grace unto them; and eternity, at times, seems open before them. They are . . . safe from dangers, secured from foes, in fellowship with God, and entitled to all spiritual blessings.

It is the way . . . of peace, of holiness, of happiness, and of salvation.

Jesus is the only way . . . by which a sinner can approach God with acceptance, in which a man can meet death and eternity with confidence, or through which he can pass to the realms of eternal glory.

Herein is love, that Jesus should condescend to become our way, in order that we may . . . escape wrath, enjoy mercy, and possess eternal glory.

Praise, O praise him, while eternity shall last!

But, reader, are you in this way? Have you passed through the strait gate that is at the head of it? Have you been stripped of self? Have you been broken down before God? Have you fled to Jesus for life? Is your entire trust and confidence in his precious blood and finished work? Do you daily go to God by him? Do you expect Heaven simply because he died for your sins, and rose again for your justification?

Examine into these matters, for they are of the greatest importance. The way is open to you. If you neglect this way - you will wander on in darkness, and at death you must lie down in sorrow and end your course in hopeless despair!

O Jesus, draw us to your self, and let us, through your glorious work . . . be accepted of the Father, be delivered from guilt, and be saved for evermore!

You are the way - to you alone, From sin and death we flee! And he who would, the Father seek, Must seek him, Lord, in thee. Your Spirit, O Redeemer, give, That we your name may trust;

Receive your glorious righteousness, And be accounted just.

Conduct us to your Father's throne, Lead us from self and sin; Our souls would walk in you alone, And Heaven on earth, begin!

Jesus is our FOUNDATION No building can be erected without a foundation. The Church of God is the building of mercy, ordained to reflect the praise of infinite wisdom, sovereign grace, impartial justice, and eternal holiness forever. But where is a foundation on which such a building can rest and be supported through eternal ages? Nature cannot produce one - but Jesus offers himself; he is ready to bear the whole weight. He alone can bear their persons, their sins, their sorrows, and their curse! He alone can have them all laid upon himself, with all their concerns; engaging to sustain them to the glory of God. He is the rock of ages, imperishable and immovable; and on this rock the Church is built, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

He is revealed as the only foundation for a sinner's hope and the only sure object of a sinner's trust. On him Jehovah laid the weight of vengeance - and on him we must repose for life and salvation. On him, the weary sinner may roll the burden of his guilt - and the laboring believer find peace and rest. This foundation is deeper than human guilt - and its top is immediately before the throne of God. The law-wrecked sinner is invited to find shelter in its cleft - and the hunted backslider to enjoy safety beneath its shade. Here we may rest from all our fears - and enjoy all

the promises of our God. Here is safety, eternal safety - and here alone. Peace flows at its foot like a river, and the voice of joy and thanksgiving resounds from its habitations. Here the wicked cease from troubling, and here the weary are at rest. The rich and the poor are here, and the servant is free from his master. This foundation has been tried by millions and has been found secure; it supports the whole fabric of mercy - and will support it forever. The waves may dash against it, storms may roar around it, and enemies may engage to attack it; but its towers shall never be dismantled or its deep foundations shook! Its inhabitants may sing when all around is in turmoil - and triumph when the world is in a blaze. Here all the attributes of Deity unite to present a firm and durable foundation to the sinner's view. He who builds on this foundation - shall never be ashamed, or confounded, world without end. To the love of Jesus, we are indebted for this glorious foundation, this rock of defense, this place of eternal security! Let his love then daily . . . draw our attention, fill our meditations, and delight our hearts!

It is the only source of happiness - and the center of true honor.

Sinner, Jesus is just the foundation that you need. He is able, he is willing to save you. Venture on him - on him alone. Venture this moment. He will receive you. He will bless you. He will save you for evermore.

Rock of eternity, he stood Immoveable in steadfast grace, Beneath the utmost wrath of God, Beneath the sin of Adam's race! And still my faith's support remains, And still he all my load sustains.

Sole basis of our faith, 'tis thus We on his life and death rely - His death from Hell delivers us, His life shall bear us to the sky!

Entitled glory to possess, By Jesus' blood and righteousness!

Jesus is our CORNER-STONE The Lord Jesus is called the chief corner-stone. He unites the whole building of mercy together, and preserves it from falling into disorder or decay. Every believer is united to him by faith and love - and all the building is fitly framed together. He unites and cements it. He is the strength and beauty of it. His fullness supplies his church, his beauty adorns it - it is only lovely through the loveliness which he has put upon it. It has no beauty, symmetry, or glory by nature; all of its beauty is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ. As he unites us to each other - so he unites us to God. We become one with God, through being one with him. The building is entirely dependent upon him to support it - and by him alone it is kept in union and safety. He unites both Jews and Gentiles; both God and man together in one glorious body. We dwell in God - and God dwells in us. We live in love with each other, and have love to the Lord - because God has loved us, and united us to himself by his Son. Jesus is the stone which the Father elected to be the foundation, and bond of union to the whole church.

He is precious to his Father - the object of his confidence and highest delight. And he is precious to every believer, being the object of his confidence and delight also. He is the center of attraction, to God and man, to earth and Heaven, to angels and saints!

We are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.

He is the life-giving corner-stone, which quickens every stone in the building and makes them living stones! All our life is from him - and our life is hid in him with God. His life pervades all the

building, and if he could be removed from his place, the church would be a lifeless, unsightly, disorderly mass! But because he lives - they live. And while he lives - he will continue to be the strength, beauty, and life of his church and people.

Herein we see his love: he not only brings us to God and into union with his saints - but he keeps us near and preserves us in union; for we are as much dependent after twenty years union, as we were when he first privileged us to enjoy that blessing.

Jesus is the key-stone of the spiritual arch! Remove him - and all is ruin and wretchedness! Retain him in his Divinity, work, sacrifice, and offices - and all is safe, honorable, and blessed. Christ is all in all. He is foundation, corner-stone, door, and top-stone! He builds the spiritual temple - and the glorious edifice shall be completed amidst shouts of grace, grace unto it! Glory, glory unto him forever and ever!

Lord, you show a Corner-stone, For us to build our hopes upon: That the fair edifice may rise, Sublime in light beyond the skies. Your people long this stone have tried, And all the powers of Hell defied;

Floods of temptations beat in vain, Well does this Rock the house sustain!

While they that scorn this precious stone, Fond of some quicksand of their own, Borne down by mighty vengeance, die, And buried deep in ruin lie!

Jesus is our REFUGE, or SHELTER

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging!" Psalms 46:1-3

Every child of Adam is guilty and exposed to the storm of Divine wrath! Jesus is the only shelter from this wrath. He opens his bleeding side and stretches out his nail-pierced hands - to receive the trembling soul just awakened to a sense of its danger, and filled with alarm and fear. He says, "Come unto me, I will secure you from divine vengeance - and screen you from the wrath to come."

Jesus is a refuge to which we may flee from . . . the rage of Satan, the cruel designs of men, and storms of Divine providence.

Here we shall find comfort, security, and peace.

He is at hand, in order that we may flee to him and enjoy confidence and satisfaction in him. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous run into it, and are safe!" Here David found safety, and sang his cares away! Here believers in every age have enjoyed protection and been truly blessed. He has been the refuge of his saints in every season of trouble - and the shelter of his people in every pelting storm. He has always secured them from the evil consequences of the storm - though he may have allowed them to feel some of its painful effects. His righteousness is a refuge from the curses of a violated law. His Word is a refuge to secure us from destructive errors. To him let us fly in every season of distress - and in him let us dwell as our refuge from all storms. For "he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High - shall abide under the shadow of the

Almighty."

We may say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in him will I trust!" "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." "Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you!" Psalms 91:2-7

Precious Lord Jesus, lead my soul to yourself as my refuge in every season of danger - and shelter me from every fearful storm. Let me enjoy your protection and defense, and rejoice in your goodness and grace!

Fellow-Christian, make Jesus your hiding-place, your covert, your house of defense. Flee to him, abide in him, trust to him - and earth and Hell shall never be able to injure your immortal soul! Jesus, our heavenly lover - receives, shelters, and secures all who flee to and trust in him!

Jesus is the BREAD of LIFE

"I am the bread of life!" Thus Jesus spoke to his disciples - and thus he has been proved to be, by all his saints. As he quickens us - so he feeds us. He is not only our shelter - but our daily bread.

Grace gives us an appetite which nothing but Christ can satisfy! The appetite is prepared for the food - and the bread of life is intended for the appetite. Christ must be daily before our minds, as the food of our faith, and the stay and staff of our souls. Without him we can do nothing. The Christian, as a Christian, enjoys nothing without Christ; in him alone - is sweetness, savor, and satisfaction to be found. Feeding upon Christ - we are a match for Satan, and we are strengthened with all might according to his glorious power. Feeding upon Christ . . . duties are changed into privileges, trials change their nature, and burdens lose their weight.

Feeding upon Christ - the Christian can do all things and is more than a conqueror. He is life-giving, life-sustaining, life-increasing, bread! It possesses every valuable property, and is free from every poisonous mixture. It suits . . . the babe that was converted but yesterday, the young man who is successfully conflicting with sin and Satan, and the hoary-headed father who expects soon to pass over Jordan.

Eternity has thrown all its excellencies into Jesus - and Divinity and humanity combine to make him suitable and sufficient. He is enough, though stripped of all beside; but the whole universe would not be enough, if he were denied. He strengthens the Christian's heart for conflict - and his hands for labor. By feeding upon him, he is enabled to run in the way of God's commandments with delight, and to endure the deepest trials with submission. Invaluable bread! may my soul be privileged to feed upon it, while I remain in the wilderness. And methinks, when entering glory I shall exclaim, "Lord, evermore give me this bread!" To this bread, we are always welcome; he kindly expostulates with us in reference to our inconsistencies and says, "Why do you spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare!" And what can this be - but his blessed self - his body bruised for our sins, and his blood shed for our redemption! He who eats

this bread - shall never hunger! He who drinks of this stream - shall never thirst! He who lives and feeds upon the bread of life - shall never die! He shall never see or taste of death; he may fall asleep in Jesus for a little while and forget his pains for a season - but he cannot die.

Jesus is our FOUNTAIN "On that day a fountain will be opened . . . to cleanse them from sin and impurity!" Zechariah 13:1

Sin defiles and pollutes every power and faculty of the soul - rendering us wholly unfit to enter or enjoy the presence of our God. No efforts of man can remove one stain of sin - yes, the labors of an angel would be in vain! But Jesus, to show his love, has opened a fountain to cleanse them from sin and impurity - a fountain infinite in value and eternal in its efficacy; it cleanses from all sin! It is thrown open to the vilest transgressors, and thousands are ready to testify that it removes every stain - and gives peace with God and joy in the Holy Spirit. No case is desperate - while the fountain remains open, and invites the soul to bathe. This fountain is the precious blood of Jesus - which procures a full pardon and a perfect cleansing.

Jesus is represented as a fountain of living waters, which contains all that is necessary to make us holy and happy. This fountain flows freely and plentifully, and he who drinks of it shall never thirst; for it will be in him a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life. Jesus is a fountain containing all good, and flowing with streams of richest, choicest blessings. Nothing can be needed - but Jesus has it. Nothing can be desired that has a tendency to make us blessed - but Jesus has promised to bestow it! Here we may wash and be clean! Here we may drink and enjoy immortal health! Here we may live and find every needful good. This fountain flows in streams as clear as crystal, making glad the city of God.

Why then should we live smarting under the wounds of sin, or groaning beneath its load? Behold, the living, the open fountain - wash and be clean, drink and be refreshed! Why should we complain of spiritual need, or groan in indigence and poverty? Let us go to Jesus, his immortal fullness contains all we can need, and he bids us come and take freely. Come, then, and supply all your needs; come, drink and forget your poverty, and remember your misery no more. Peace and Pardon, Cleansing and Health, Comfort and Satisfaction - flow in full and never-failing streams!

Welcome you poor and miserable sons of Adam, Jesus bids you welcome; for you it has been continued open until the present day. Come then, and be made rich, clean, holy, and happy! The love of Jesus bids you, the comforts that attend healing invite you, and the solemnities of eternity urge you!

Came to Calvary's holy mountain, Sinners! ruined by the fall;

Here a pure and healing fountain Flows to you, to me, to all, In a full perpetual tide, Opened when the Savior died.

Come in sorrow and contrition, Wounded, impotent, and blind;

Here the guilty free remission, Here the troubled, peace may find.

Health this fountain will restore.

He that drinks shall thirst no more.

He that drinks shall live forever, 'Tis a soul-renewing flood;

God is faithful, God will never Break his covenant in blood.

Signed when our Redeemer died, Sealed when he was glorified!

Jesus is our SUN The darkness of ignorance and error has covered the earth, and the gross darkness of superstition has filled the people! Jesus, to display his love, came a luminary into the world, that those who believe in him might not walk in darkness - but have the light of life. The glorious sun of righteousness arose to disperse the darkness that everywhere brooded over our world, and to bring life and immortality to light.

He reveals the Father in his incorruptible justice and immutable love; he unveils the designs of Satan; and shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. We who were once in darkness, are by him made light in the Lord. He delivers us from the power of darkness - and guides our feet into the way of peace. In his light, we see light; and are enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. His rays produce spiritual health and make us fruitful in every good word and work. To him we are indebted for intelligence, zeal, comfort, and every holy principle; all flow from his fullness - and are produced by his power. But for Jesus, we would have been sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The coldness and gloom of a moral winter had benumbed and bewildered every power and faculty, and we would have still been led captive by the devil at his will. But now he shines and we see our danger, and discover the way of escape. We now see . . . the glorious remedy - and embrace it; the way of holiness - and walk in it; the mild and attractive glories of Jehovah - and love him; the veracity of the promises - and trust them; the suitableness of the doctrines - and embrace them; the excellency of the ordinances - and attend to them; the adaptation of the precepts - and walk by them; the nature of sin - and flee from it. In his light, we . . . watch against temptations, pursue our daily course of prescribed obedience, and bring forth fruit to the glory of sovereign grace.

Truly this light is sweet - and a pleasant thing it is, to behold this sun.

Jesus is to his people, as the light of the morning when the sun arises even a morning without clouds. Every ray of hope, every particle of sound knowledge, and every spiritual exercise - is the effect of the shining of this sun into the heart.

O lovely and loving Savior, send out your light and your truth, until every dark corner of the earth is enlightened with scriptural knowledge, and people of every climate and color unite to praise your adorable name! Shine into my heart - shine upon my soul forever!

Jesus is our PORTION, or INHERITANCE "You are my portion, O Lord!" Psalms 119:57 The generality of the Lord's people are poor in this world. To make up for the lack of outward good things - Jesus reveals himself to them as their portion. He presents himself with all his riches, possessions, and glories; and bids us live upon him, with a view to our living for him, and living with him. In him, all that is necessary, useful, or desirable - is to be found. He has unsearchable riches and boundless possessions. Heaven is his throne - and earth is his footstool.

He is surely an all-satisfying portion. If Jesus does not satisfy the soul - then there is nothing that ever can do it. If infinite wisdom, boundless grace, unparalleled goodness, and unfading glory will not satisfy - then we may ask: What will? He who has Christ - has all things; and will not all things

satisfy one person? All to claim, all to enjoy, all to use.

Jesus is an all-sufficient portion. He has . . . mercy to pardon you, grace to sanctify you, righteousness to justify you, power to defend you, wisdom to guide you, a fullness to supply you, and a glorious Heaven to receive you!

He can . . . sanctify your afflictions, subdue your iniquities, cleanse your hearts, strengthen your souls, conquer your foes, and make all things work together for your good. Being the all-sufficient God, he is sufficient for time - and sufficient for eternity! Angels are delighted with him, and God the Father finds satisfaction in him.

Jesus is a never-failing portion. Earthly friends often fail when most needed, health fails, strength fails, riches fail, all may fail - but Jesus will never fail. His immutability forbids the possibility of a failure, for he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His eternity is the only measurement of their happiness, and his perfections are their eternal security.

He is our present portion, we should live upon him daily. He will be our eternal portion, we shall live upon him forever. He comprehends all that God can communicate, and saints receive - all may be received from him, to the glory of God the Father. He took our nature that he may be able to communicate, and he invites us to him that we may enjoy his communications.

Holy lover of your people, help me to live upon you as my portion daily; may I choose you for my inheritance, glory in you as my portion, and glorify you for my beneficence and love!

IX. The Love of Christ Displayed in the EXPERIENCE of His People. The love of Christ displayed in the CALLING and CONVERSION of His people. The love of Jesus, which had been fixed upon his people from all eternity, is manifested to them in time - by calling them out of darkness into his marvelous light. They are . . . dead - until he quickens them by his Spirit; dark - until he enlightens them by his word; in bondage - until he frees them by his grace.

He . . . convinces them of their awful state, opens their eyes to see their danger, and fills them with concern for life and salvation. Their convictions are permanent and their distress continues - until they look unto him whom they have pierced and find safety and peace.

He calls them . . . from the world - to which they were wedded; from sin - by which they were enslaved; and from Satan - whose captives they were.

He calls them . . . to his throne - where they plead for his mercy; to his cross - where they weep at the displays of his love; and to his church - where they unite to honor his name. His word becomes effectual, because attended by the Spirit, and his people are all willing in the day of his power. They see . . . sin - and flee from it; holiness - and pant after it; the true character of the world - and forsake it; the nature of the church - and unite with it.

They are called unto his kingdom and glory - to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. The understanding is enlightened, the conscience is aroused and cleansed, the affections are set on things above, and the will chooses what it once abhorred!

They are in Christ, and they are new creatures; old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new. God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved them, has

quicken them together with Christ, and by grace they are saved. Salvation is now brought home; their sins, which are many, are all forgiven them, and they are accepted in the beloved. They are now the people of God, they have obtained mercy and are habitations for God through the Spirit. With his loving-kindness, Jesus has drawn them to himself, and now they cheerfully run after him.

Reader, are you converted?

You were dead - are you now alive?

You were darkness - are you now light in the Lord?

You were afar off - are you now near unto God by the blood of his cross?

You were lost - are you found, and do you sit at the feet of Jesus? Do not pass over these inquiries hastily - but let them sink down into your heart. The love of Christ displayed in SUPPLYING His people. Our needs are as constant as the day, if not for the body - yet for the soul. We need the daily renewing of the Holy Spirit - or all our graces wither, droop, and fade. We need to be supplied afresh with light, with courage, and with spirituality - or we . . . grope like the blind for the wall, flee like the coward from his foe, or become carnal, careless, and worldly.

Jesus has an infinite fullness of grace to supply all our needs - and he has a generous heart to give freely and frequently. He gives grace - grace to help in time of need. He supplies his people so as to . . . prevent pride, produce humility, keep dependent, preserve from destruction, and lay us under infinite obligations.

We may need much, many things - and need them often. He has given us his promise, "those who seek the Lord - shall not lack any good thing." "You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you." Hitherto he has supplied us with . . . a liberal hand, a loving heart, in a gracious way. Not one thing has failed, of all that he has promised. We have found that godliness with contentment is great gain. Let us then cast all our cares upon him - for he cares for us. Let us look to his throne whenever we need - and expect a supply, for he is faithful who has promised. He can never lack information respecting our circumstances, nor instruments to convey his blessings; his eyes run to and fro through the earth to show himself strong in behalf of all them whose hearts are perfect, or sincere and upright towards him. Let us trust then in the Lord forever, taking no thought for tomorrow; but believe that as our day is - so shall our strength be, and that his grace will be found sufficient for us. Our loving Father will display his love, in supplying all the needs of his children, at all times, in all places - until mortality is swallowed up of life, and all their needs are lost in his infinite fullness of grace and glory. The love of Christ displayed in COMFORTING His people.

Jesus is emphatically "The Consolation of Israel" - the foundation, source, and spring of comfort. He comforts them in all their tribulations. Comfort is not squandered, but wisely communicated by him. He gives the strong drink of divine consolation to those that are of heavy hearts. The sense of his love, the light of his countenance, and the application of his word - will fill the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. These things are enjoyed by his people in answer to prayer, in the exercise of living faith. He manifests himself unto them, as he does not unto the world. He supps with them - and they with him. These comforts satisfy the soul: it no more thirsts after the vanities and pleasures of the world, but cries, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!"

These consolations satisfy them at all times, and they desire to be ravished always with his love. These consolations sanctify, as well as satisfy; the more happy - the more holy. If Jesus endears himself unto us - then we desire above all things to glorify him; we hate sin more fervently; we wish to honor Christ habitually; we desire that every thought, word, and action should aim at his praise.

Jesus comforts us in meditation: "In the multitude of my thoughts within me - your comforts delight my soul." While we muse upon his perfections, work, and love, before we are aware, our souls are made like the chariots of Amminadab. The flame of divine love kindles, the affections run out and fix upon their proper object, and we exclaim, "Whom have I in Heaven but you, and there is none upon earth I desire, beside you!" Jesus is then altogether lovely; the fairest among ten thousand; the light of our eyes, the joy of our hearts, and the strength of our souls.

We are comforted . . . by his cross, by his word, and by the manifestations of his grace and mercy.

Holy Savior! frequently manifest yourself unto me, and comfort me under all the trials to which I am exposed; fill me with . . . love to your name, zeal in your cause, and concern for your glory; and let me daily walk in the comforts of the Holy Spirit. The love of Christ displayed in SUPPORTING His people. The Christian's burdens are frequently very heavy, and he groans, being burdened. The warfare within often fills him with grief and distress: corruption is so strong, temptations are so many, grace is so weak, and fears are so numerous

- that he sometimes thinks he is of all men most miserable. He has a burden of worldly cares, from which he feels he cannot get free, and his family trials add to the heavy weight. He is pressed down beneath them, and cries, "I loathe it, I loathe it! I would not live always!"

Sometimes he thinks he never can hold on, and hold out unto the end, he and is ready to exclaim, "I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living, with the inhabitants of the heavenly world!" But Jesus strengthens him with strength in his soul, and he goes from strength to strength. He is supported under his trials, though he is not delivered from them.

Jesus shows his love in sustaining his people under their trials, as much as in delivering them from them, and they can do or bear all things through his strengthening them. His word of promise is the great means of support; he says, "I will be with you, I will strengthen you, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." This promise has supported thousands in the deepest trials - and will support thousands more! With this promise we may sing, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me." The ordinances of grace often yield support to the soul - in prayer and praise they find relief; and the preaching of the gospel often gives them a little reviving in their bondage, so that they leave the temple no longer sad. Savior, support me by your presence, your word, and the communications of your grace - that I may overcome all and sit down with you on your throne!

X. The Love of Christ displayed in the HONOR he puts upon his people.

He calls us His LOVE, His DELIGHT

You shall be called Hephzibah, my delight is in her. Though vile, polluted, and depraved as we are - he calls us his love! He delights in our persons, prayers, services, and graces. He calls us his love before angels, devils, and his Father; and he visits us in this character. As his love - he claims

our hearts and calls for our affections, and we can only be happy as we are loving and delighting in him. What stupendous grace is here! Does Jesus call us his love? Yes, he calls us the dearly-beloved of his soul - and he treats us as such. O let us love him in return! Let us make him . . . the supreme object of our affections, the subject of our meditations, and the delight of our souls.

O love the Savior, all you his saints. Look upon yourselves as his love, believe that you are his delight - and all your doubts, fears, and misgivings must die. His love to you is wonderful; and it is wonderful that while he loves you so much - you love him so little. May we hear him daily saying to us, "Arise my love, my lovely one, and come away!" "Leave the world with all its vanities, and come and hold communion with me; I am waiting to open my heart to you, bestow my blessings upon you, and fill you with joy and peace."

We look at ourselves, and we see ourselves as black as the tents of Kedar; he looks upon us, and says, "You are beautiful, O my love!" O beloved, what dignity, what honor is this! Does Jesus, who is the brightness of glory, and the express image of his Father's person, call us his love, his delight? Let us then consecrate every faculty to his praise. To be the object of a creature's love is sweet - but to be the object of the Creator's love is much sweeter. May I ever cherish the thought - Jesus loves me! Under all my trials and afflictions, in all my temptations and sorrows, notwithstanding my many sins and fears - Jesus loves me! He says to me, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; continue you in my love."

I am the object of his delight. He delights . . . to claim me - as the purchase of his blood; to own me - as the object of his affections; to preserve me - as his care and charge; to bless me - as his chosen bride!

Truly it is wonderful that such sinners should be the delight of God. But it is as true, as it is wonderful. They may be despised by the world. Their beauty and glory may be concealed. They may appear to be forsaken by God and men. They may sit and sigh, solitary and lonely. They may be depressed and grieved in spirit. But thus says the Lord, "You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you!" Isaiah 62:3-5

Reader, do you know the love of Christ? Have you proved his condescension? Have you felt the sweet influence of his Spirit? Have you received his grace? He invites you to him. He will receive you. If as a poor lost sinner, you apply to him for pardon, peace, and everlasting life - he will save you, sanctify you, introduce you to his Father, and call you his love, his delight. You must either believe his word, seek his face, and obtain his blessing - or treat him with contempt, insult him on his throne, and so despise your own soul. Consider this. O may you lay it to heart!

He calls us His FRIENDS

What an unspeakable honor, to be the friend of Jesus! Yet he says, "I have called you friends." He has a friend's heart - and loves us with an exquisite love. He looks down from his high throne of glory - and notices all that concerns us, and he feels the deepest interest in the same. He cares for us - so that we may have nothing to make us anxious or distressed.

Oh! if we could but always realize that Jesus is our friend and that he considers us his friends and glories in the connection; how many pains it would save us, how happy and holy we would live! As a friend he visits us, calls to us, provides for us, sends us his mercies, and rejoices to do us good. For us he has promised to provide, to us he has promised to give, with us he has promised to walk. Let us then cultivate the friendliest feelings toward Jesus, assured that as he will never injure us himself, so he will never allow any other to do so. To him, let us repair when we need a friend - and put his friendship to the test. He will rejoice over us to do us good. He will seize every opportunity to bless us and make us a blessing.

O beloved, let us trust his word, confide in his love, expect to prove him faithful, and rejoice in his friendliness toward such poor insignificant worms! True, we are totally unworthy of such a favor, and it often appears too vast; but nothing can be too great to expect from him who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross - that he might save our souls, enjoy our company, and prove himself our friend.

O Jesus! let your love make a deep and lasting impression on my heart, enable me always, and in all places, to prove myself your friend, and rejoice, that you will call me your friend on earth and before your Father's throne.

Jesus calls every believer a friend - and treats him as such. His best friends - were once his bitterest enemies. They hated him with scorn. They deserved his fiercest wrath. But he always loved them. He ever pitied them. He sent his gospel to them. He accompanied his gospel with his Holy Spirit. He showed them their folly. He convinced them of their sin. He subdued their hearts. He destroyed their enmity. He reconciled them to himself and to his Father. He glories in his conquest. He rejoices over his vanquished ones. And they glory in it too, and rejoice that he has changed their character and their nature. As his friends, he desires that they would frequently converse with him; often visit him; daily talk with him; act the part of friends toward him. He who has friends - should show himself friendly. This should especially be the case when Jesus is the friend.

Christian, wherever you go, remember, you are the friend of Christ. Never allow your friend to be insulted, without speaking for him or withdrawing from such company. Sinner, Jesus is just the friend you need. He is willing to be your friend. You have acted basely toward him. Your thoughts of him have been inconsistent and base. Your words have been stout against him. But he is ready to pardon. Seek his friendship - and you are made forever. Then you will have a friend in life, a friend in death - a friend in the invisible world, a friend on the judgment seat, and a friend throughout eternity.

He calls us SONS of GOD

O the blessedness that is wrapped up in this relation! Jesus is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and we are the sons of God by adoption, regeneration, and faith. Our relation to God flows from his sovereign love. It is an high expression of his grace. He looks upon us and deals with us, as his children. Every trouble is sent by his love, every trial is to do us good. He has justified, sanctified, and saved us in himself; and he will manifest himself unto us as our Brother and Friend. He takes us by the hand and leads us to the throne of grace and says, "When you pray, say, my father." Your Father and my Father, your God and my God.

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:2-3. Now we are admitted into his presence; now we hold fellowship with him and rejoice in hope of the glory which is to be revealed.

Let us endeavor to realize our present sonship; it will produce . . . boldness at His throne of grace; contrition at His cross; confidence in His Word; love to His person; contentment with our lot; victory over the world, zeal for His glory; importunity in prayer; and encouragement under all our trials and troubles.

We are not presently recognized by the world, as the children of God; we are in a distant land, for instruction and discipline; but we shall soon be sent for home. Heaven is our family mansion, and Jesus will present us to his Father, saying. "Here am I, Father, and the children whom you have given me!" Beloved, herein is love. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

O Holy Spirit! descend and bear witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. Let us imitate Jesus, our Father's first-born, and aim to live up to our title, dignity, and destiny.

We are either sons of God - or enemies of God. Every believer is a son, for we "are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ." He may not enjoy his adoption. He may not just now be able to trace out his relationship - but he is a child of God.

Every one . . . who mourns over sin, who flies to the Savior, and who departs from iniquity - is a child of God.

God is now his Father. Jesus is not ashamed to call him brother. The angels regard him as the object of Jehovah's love and are ready to perform any kind office for him. The promises are his. The eternal inheritance is his. But if we are unbelievers - then we are . . .

God's enemies, children of wrath, under the curse, in imminent danger!

Satan is our father.

Sin is our element.

Hell is our eternal portion!

There is no coming to God, but by Jesus; there is no coming to Jesus, but by faith; and every one who comes to God by Christ is acknowledged as a son of God and an heir of immortality.

Reader, are you a child of God? If not, you are the child of Satan! Have you the Spirit of Christ? If not, you are none of his.

If you cannot live without Christ - there is no question but you are savingly interested in Christ; and if you are interested in Christ, then God is your Father; you are his child, and Jesus is your elder Brother.

He calls us HEIRS of GOD

Love has not only made us God's children, but constituted us heirs - heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ! The Christian is heir of all things, and the Apostle says, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours: and you are Christ's!" All the provision mercy has made, all the promises love has given, all the glory grace will reveal - all is ours. All the provision is in Christ - for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell - and Christ is ours. All the promises of God are in him, yes, and in him amen - and he is ours. We are united to him; identified with him as members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones - and we shall share with him in all his joys, triumphs, and glories.

All God has to communicate, he has made over to the Lord Jesus: and all that Jesus possesses - he shares with his brethren, who are constituted joint-heirs with him. What a mystery of mercy is this!

Let us look back to the rock from whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence we were dug:

How base our origin - the dust!

How degraded our condition - slaves of sin and Satan!

How fearful our character - enemies to God!

How dreadful our eternal doom - the lake which burns with brimstone and fire!

Contrast this with . . . our present relation - children of God; our high standing - in heavenly places in Christ; our glorious privilege - justified from all things; our fixed destiny - to be forever with the Lord! And to what is this astonishing change to be ascribed? To love - the love of God in Christ Jesus! "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us - that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1 To grace - the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

O to grace what debtors!

O the wonders of the love of God in Jesus!

God has constituted us heirs, that we may receive, possess, and enjoy forever - all he has to bestow upon his creatures. His boundless resources will be thrown open to us. His riches will be laid out upon us. He has given us to his Son - and has given his Son to us. We are now one with him - and as the bride inherits in, and with her husband - even so we inherit in and with Christ, who is our beloved husband. Our God has gifted everything to Jesus, as the head of his body the Church, for it has pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell - and he has united us to Jesus by the closest and strongest ties, so that we are joint-heirs with Christ.

It requires much faith to believe, realize, and enjoy this. It must be received simply on the ground of the divine testimony. We must believe it - because God has declared it. Expect to enjoy it - because God has promised it and is faithful to his word.

He calls us His JEWELS!

Jewels are of themselves costly and are highly valued by their owners. We, though worthless in ourselves - cost our adorable Savior an immense price! To procure our release, to purchase our freedom - he left his Father's bosom, came into our world, labored, suffered, bled, and died; he gave himself for us. We are bought with a very high price. He died to purchase us, he lives to save us, and he will come and receive us to himself. We are his purchased possession, intended to deck his mediatorial crown, to reflect his praise, to shine to his glory for evermore.

He highly values us. "Since you were precious in my sight," he says, "you have been honorable, and I have loved you." We are valued not according to our intrinsic excellence - but according to his estimation of us. At what price does a man value his bride whom he tenderly loves, in whom his happiness is made up? He can look around upon creation - but no object which meets his eye appears equally important or valuable in his estimation. Just so with Jesus, he loves his people so much, he esteems them highly, that no other created object possesses equal interest in his heart. He holds them fast in the hand of his omnipotence and says, "None shall pluck them out of my hand." He will present them before his Father by and by, and joyfully exclaim, "Not one of them lost!" For their safety - he employs . . . his watchful eye, his powerful arm, his numerous angelic hosts! For their security and preservation - he arranges, directs, and controls all things; so that all things work together for the best, to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose.

Jesus will save them, as his blood-bought flock of people; and they shall shine as the gemstones of his crown! "They shall be mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels!" How strange, that he should value us so highly! That he should compare us to all that is beautiful, desirable, or costly in nature! But He really does so! We are not only his subjects - his friends - his children - his brethren - his bride - but his ornaments - his jewels! And he is coming to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all those who believe. They are a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord - and a royal diadem in the hand of their God. He loves to think of them, he loves to look upon them, he loves to speak of them, he loves to hear them speak, and he loves to commend them. Men may despise them - their Savior will not!

He calls us His SPECIAL TREASURE!

"Now if you will obey Me and keep My covenant, you will be My own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to Me!" Exodus 19:5 The Lord Jesus is immensely rich; he has riches on earth - and riches in heaven - but he calls his people his special treasure. He esteems them more than all the world besides. He considers them his choicest treasure. And while we are deploring our poverty, mourning over our worthlessness, and grieving on account of our insignificance - he is looking upon us as invaluable beyond all price. He does not see - as man sees. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. But can it be the case, is it true, that Jesus calls such poor, depraved, worthless worms - his special treasure? Can it be, that he esteems us above angels - and values us above all price?

Yes, angels are but his servants - we are his bride!

They stand around his throne - but we are to sit with him on it!

They enjoy his favor - we wear his very nature.

Such is the love of Jesus to his people, that he esteems himself poor without them. And therefore, though he was rich - yet that he might claim, possess, and enjoy them - he parted with all, and became poor. He is now preparing his cabinet to receive his treasure - and when all is complete, he will display his treasures before the eye of his Father and before all the hosts of Heaven, and he will rejoice over them with joy. He will rest in his love, he will joy over them with singing. Astonishing thought! Amazing idea!

O the love of Jesus! fraught with wonders - be my song, in this, the house of my pilgrimage! May this love be constantly before my eyes as the most delightful object, and be constantly sounded in my ears as the sweetest subject. O may it be shed abroad in my heart, filling me, as it is calculated to do - with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

What a sweet thought it is to the poor tempted Christian, that he is the special treasure of Jesus; and as every man pays particular attention to his treasure - so will Jesus pay particular attention to him.

He is safe - for Jesus will take care of his treasure.

He is honored - for the eye and heart of Jesus is fixed on him. Is Jesus our treasure? Do we prize him? Do we hide him in our hearts? Are we prepared to part with all things for him?

Sinner, Jesus is not your treasure. You have despised him. No one, in Heaven or Hell, views Jesus just as you do. All in Heaven value, admire, and adore him. All in Hell see his value, though they have no part nor interest in him. While you continue as you are, you cannot be considered as the special treasure of Jesus. You are included among those of whom it is written, "He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel!" Therefore "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

He calls us His PORTION!

"You are my portion, O Lord." Psalms 119:57 "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Deuteronomy 32:9

God takes pleasure in his people - he will beautify the meek with salvation. Jesus presents himself to us as our portion - and takes us to himself as his portion. His eye and his heart are on us perpetually. His delights are with his people. Heaven will never fully satisfy him - while one of his people is upon earth. We are his paradise. He is at home in his church, and with his people; their presence adds to his joy and completes his happiness, therefore he prays, "Father, I will that those also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am - that they may behold my glory, which you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world." The happiness of Jesus will be complete - when he has all his saints with him, all his children around him - forever delivered from sorrow and secured from danger.

Jesus has not received his portion yet - any more than we have. He has but a part - and still waits expecting the arrival of the remainder of his family. Our portion will never be complete - until we are with Jesus, like him, and see him as he is - nor will his portion be complete until then. Divine love cannot be satisfied, until it has all its objects - until it has conferred upon them all that it has to bestow - until it has raised them to the highest pitch of dignity and glory. Our beloved Lord is

waiting and longing for the happy day - it is the joy set before him, the recompense of all his sorrows and pains.

We can think of nothing more astonishing than this, that the Creator of all things should fix upon a small portion of his creatures and those among the most depraved - and call them his portion, his lot, his inheritance. But he actually does so. His thoughts seem to be full of his people. His purposes are formed for their welfare, in connection with his glory. No language seems to be too kind for them; no blessing too great for them; no place too good for them; no figure too strong to set forth the estimate which God has formed of them!

God's portion! Had the question been proposed to us, "What is God's portion?" - what could we have said? Who ever would have thought of saying, His people? Yet it is so! May this blessed truth sink down into our hearts. May we dwell upon it and draw sweet consolation from it. May we realize our saving interest in it - and in return, make God our portion, thinking of him as such, living upon him as such, speaking of him as such; saying with the Church, "God is my portion, says my soul, therefore will I hope in him."

Christ has promised to MAKE US LIKE HIMSELF!

We have borne the image of the earthly - we shall bear the image of the heavenly. The first Adam ruined us - the second restores us. "We know that when he appears, we shall be like him - for we shall see him as he is!" 1 John 3:2. We are predestined to be conformed to his image. Now we groan, being burdened with sin. Now we are grieved, because . . . our tempers are so unlovely, our feelings are so carnal, our minds are so wandering, and our hearts are so depraved. But Jesus will fill us with his Spirit, and we shall sympathize with him in every sentiment, feeling, and design. We shall be exactly like him. He will come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe. Then selfishness will be forever done away. There will be no more rebellion in the will, hardness in the heart, wandering in the affections, guilt in the conscience, or blindness in the understanding; but every faculty will be perfect in holiness, and the whole soul filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

These glorious hopes we owe to Jesus' love and blood. Love pitied us, love wrought for us, love died for us, love quickened us, love supplies us, love will raise us from the dead, and love will conform us to itself before the throne of God forever. O how wonderful the love of Christ! Well may the Apostle say, "It passes knowledge." May the Lord direct our hearts into it and into the patient waiting for Jesus.

We shall be like him! Then we shall be perfect in knowledge! "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

We shall be like him! Then we shall be perfect in love! We shall love God perfectly and supremely. We shall love all who love Christ, even as we love ourselves.

We shall be like him! Then we shall be perfect in happiness! Every wish will be gratified, every desire fulfilled, every prayer answered.

We shall be like him! Then we shall behold his face in righteousness; we shall be satisfied, when we awake with his likeness. He will show us the path of life; in his presence is fullness of joy; and

at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

We shall be like him! We shall be glorious - glorious in body, and glorious in soul; glorious in state, and glorious in employment. Is Jesus enthroned? We shall sit with him on his throne. Is Jesus crowned? He will give unto us an unfading crown of glory. Is Jesus a conqueror over every foe? We shall be more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Christ has promised that His people be forever WITH Him!

"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" Php 1:23

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am!" John 14:3 We shall be forever with him!

Now Jesus is with his people in spirit, then they will be with him forever in person. Love draws kindred spirits together; the love of Jesus shed abroad in our hearts now draws up our affections to his throne; but the omnipotent love will draw us out of our graves to shine in his presence before his throne forever.

Now we have to mourn His absence. Now we exclaim, "O that I knew where I could find Him!" But he has provided something better for us, even to dwell forever in His presence - which will constitute our Heaven, our glory, and our portion!

O with what rapture shall we fix and feast our eyes upon Him, and how will the thought that we are to be forever with Him, thrill through our souls, and open ten thousand gushing streams of unutterable delight and joy! O with what joy shall we hear him say, "Come you who are blessed of my Father." The presence of Jesus will . . . dissipate all gloom, disperse all slavish fears, chase away all darkness, free from all pain, deliver from all sorrow, preserve from all sickness, raise us above all temptations, and fill us with joy unspeakably glorious. The presence of Jesus will . . . perfect our knowledge, secure our peace, and complete our satisfaction.

We shall be forever with him, this is certain, for his promise is immutable - the virtue and efficacy of his atoning blood is eternal - the nature of our God is unchangeable - the kingdom over which he will reign is everlasting-and the covenant cannot be broken. Beloved, let us think of these things. They will cheer us, for they are full of comfort. They will stimulate us, for they contain strong consolation. Let us exercise faith on these things, for they are the true sayings of God. Let us speak of these things, for they are calculated to do others good. Let us expect these things, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Here we may be cast down, for the way is rough and our trials many; here we may mourn the absence of our God, for he does at times hide himself from the house of Israel; here we may be tempted by Satan, for he is the god of this world; but the love of Jesus will soon rescue us, and we shall be received into his presence to abide forever. To be with Christ - to be with Christ forever - this comprises all we can wish, all we do or can desire! But we shall soon be with him, for "He who shall come, will come and will not tarry."

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