

Love: On Our Side

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer emphasizes that true Christian love, rooted in faith and modeled after Christ, is essential for believers and the church community.

Topics: "Divine Love", "Christian Unity"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes that love is the essence of Christianity, distinguishing it from mere human affection by its divine origin and selflessness. He explains that true love, as a fruit of the Spirit, transcends personal feelings and is demonstrated through actions towards both friends and enemies. Meyer asserts that God's election is rooted in love, and that genuine faith naturally produces love for all believers. He encourages the church to embody love in all relationships, highlighting that love must be sincere and modeled after Christ's example. Ultimately, love is the key to understanding and experiencing the fullness of Christ's love.

Transcript

IN ITS deepest sense love is the perquisite of Christianity. There is something like it, in germ, at least, outside the school of Christ; just as wild flowers on the hedgerows recall the rich splendour of the hothouse. But in all such there are flaws, traces of selfishness and passion, which prevent their realizing God's fair ideal. Love, as the Bible uses the word, is the fruit of the Spirit. It may be grafted on the natural stock, but it is essentially his creation.

To feel towards enemies what others feel towards friends; to descend as rain and sunbeams on the unjust as well as the just; to minister to those who are unprepossessing and repellent as others minister to the attractive and winsome; to be always the same, not subject to moods or fancies or whims; to suffer long; to take no account of evil; to rejoice with the truth; to bear, believe, hope, and endure all things, never to fail--this is love, and such love is the achievement of the Holy Spirit alone.

GOD'S ELECTION POINTS TO HIS LOVE. (Ephesians 1:4)

Men have sometimes thought and spoken of God's choice in such a way as to foster an exclusive and proud conceit; as though God's election were a high wall enclosing a favoured few, so that their flower and fruit might be kept from every defiling, pilfering hand. To think this is to misconceive the entire purpose of God.

We do not deny that God has enclosed us from the great moorland waste, or that He has expended on us special pains and care; but He has not gone to this expenditure for us or for Himself so much as that the perfume of our love might be wafted afar; that we might fertilize desert places, as bees carry the pollen in their down; and that thirsty souls might be refreshed by our rare fruitage, wrought for us by the Holy Spirit. We were chosen to love, to love God above all; and to love man, made in his image.

If a man boast of his election in an arrogant and exclusive spirit, he shows that he has missed its point and aim, and is certainly outside its scope. The eternal purpose of God reveals itself, not merely in the new-found rapture, but in the new-found love. The love of God proves the election of God. If you do not love, you may prate of election as you will, but you have neither part nor lot in it. But if we are in Christ, by a living faith, we have been chosen to love, and love must be Divinely possible nay--easy. God's choice always carries with it an equivalent of power to be and do that for which He has chosen us.

LOVE AND FAITH ARE INSEPARABLE. (Ephesians 1:15)

When there is faith in the Lord Jesus, there will always be love toward all the saints; because faith is the faculty of taking God into the heart. Faith is God-receptiveness. Faith appropriates the nature of God; as the expanded lung does the mountain air, or as the child does the parent's gift. Faith, like a narrow channel, conveys God's ocean fullness into the lagoons of human needs. Wherever, therefore, faith links the believer to the Lord Jesus, his nature, which is love, pure as mountain dew, begins to flow in to the waiting, expectant heart; and then to flow out thence towards all the saints.

The love of God knows no favourite sect. It singles out no special school; but, as the sun and wind of nature, breathes and shines alike on all. It is cosmopolitan and universal. You cannot imprison it within the walls of any one Christian community. It laughs at your restrictions, and with equal grace raises up witnesses and standard-bearers from all parts of the Church. Thus as we become more like God, our love overleaps the barrier of our little pond and passes out to greet all saints, and to expend itself on the great world of men.

IT IS ONLY AS WE LOVE THAT WE APPREHEND CHRIST'S LOVE. (Ephesians 3:17)

The R.V. is very emphatic. The apostle asked that his Ephesian converts might be strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith; to the end that, being rooted and grounded in love, they might be strong to apprehend, with all saints, the love of Christ. How remarkable this stress on strength! Why is it so needful in connection with love?

Is it that we should be strong to obey the least promptings of the gracious Master, Christ? Is it that we need strength to suppress ourselves in favour of the new passion which has entered our hearts, until it shall have become all-powerful? Is it that the bud of Divine love in its most perfect form can only be grafted on a strong stock? Any of these suppositions may meet the case. But we must be strengthened ere we can receive the fullness of the indwelling Lord; and one chief result of his presence within is to make us strong to apprehend his love.

ROOTED IN LOVE.--The rootlets that moor a tree to the soil and gather nutriment for its growth are very slender and delicate. So the actions to which the Spirit prompts us on behalf of others may seem very trivial; but each one gives us greater constancy and strength, and makes us quicker to understand Christ's love to us.

GROUNDING IN LOVE.--A grounded solid foundation is all-important for the building which is to tower into the air, affording distant glimpses of the landscape; and those who desire to behold, as in a panorama, the love of God, must be content to perform many deeds of unselfish goodness in the depths of obscurity and self-forgetfulness. What we do for others for Christ's sake, and what we feel towards them, is a priceless education, preparing us to know his love. Perform loving deeds; will to do them, even if you at first shrink from them; do them from a sense of duty, if not of delight; presently you will come to delight in them, and you will say to yourself as you go to and fro, "This is something like Jesus feels towards me." Love apprehends love.

BUT LOVE NEVER LIVES ALONE. It summons all saints to its aid. No one saint or school of devout thinkers can compass all God's love. He who has ascended Snowdon from Llanberis must take counsel with those who left Beddgelert and Capel Curig in the early morning, that each may detail the glories he has seen; and so together they apprehend the majestic beauty of the entire mountain, as no one could of himself.

LOVE SHOULD BE THE ATMOSPHERE OF OUR CHURCH RELATION SHIPS. (Ephesians 4:2, Ephesians 4:15, Ephesians 4:16)

The unity or oneness of the Spirit is a Divine reality, which we have not to make, but to keep. Try as we may, we cannot make it a whit more perfect than it is. No bases of agreement, no conferences or conventions, can do this. But we are called upon to give all diligence, that the Divine ideal may be realized, so far as possible, among the saints. There will never be uniformity; but there may be unity. The pipes in the great organ will never be all of the same length or tone; but they may be supplied by the same breath, and conspire to utter the same melody.

It must be our endeavour to guard against everything that would jar with the inner unity of the Spirit. Jealousy, bickering, harsh words, uncharitable misrepresentations--these must be under the ban of the loving soul. We must forbear one another in love.

It is often necessary to proclaim the truth, to defend it in the pulpit or the drawing-room, to enforce it to individuals to whom it may be extremely unpalatable. But love must prompt the speech and control the utterance. It is not enough to speak the truth; we must speak it in love. When a minister told the sainted McCheyne that on the previous Sunday he had preached the awful doom of the ungodly, he replied, "I hope you preached tenderly." Oh for more of the spirit of the apostle, who spoke with weeping of those that were enemies of the cross of Christ! It is when there is perfect love between us and our fellow-believers, that the grace of God can pass easily from one to another, through every busy point of supply, and through the working in due measure of every part. If we are out of fellowship with any, to that extent we cannot impart to them, or they to us. But when love pervades the body as the genial spring-warmth the woodlands, there is an up-building and out-flouring in love. Each gives to another, and gets as he gives.

HUMAN LOVE SHOULD BE MODELED ON THE DIVINE. (Ephesians 5:2, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 5:28, Ephesians 5:33)

It is no ordinary love to which we are summoned. Whether in the home circle, where man and wife live in each other's presence, or in the daily walk and conversation of life, we are to imitate God, as his dear children. It is not enough to love as our fellows do. We must love as Christ did. Our one ideal must be, "as Christ loved."

To love foes to make them friends; to love in the teeth of obloquy and shame; to love to the point of self-giving and blood; to love the foul till the pollution gives place to purity and beauty --such is the love of Christ. Let us sit at his feet and learn of Him, until we reflect Him, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Oh to love like Thee, blessed Master! and that we may, fill us with thy love until our cup run over!

OUR LOVE MUST BE SINCERE. (Ephesians 6:24)

There are plenty who say, "Lord, Lord," but who do not the things that He says. It is easy to be profuse in our expressions, and readily swayed by gusts of emotion, and yet to be heartless and loveless. But such do not love with sincerity. They resemble the shallow soil, where the seed soon fructifies, and as soon dies, because there is only rock beneath. For such the apostle had no words of benediction.

But wherever there is sincere love to Jesus, however weak and ignorant the disciple, there is a member of the mystical body, the Church, and one on whom our benediction may alight. You may not speak our Shibboleth or accept our creed; but if you sincerely love Jesus, we bid you welcome and wish you grace.

Spirit of God, baptize us in God's holy fire, that we may begin to glow with the sacred flame, and be burning ones indeed!

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