

# *The* EVANGELICAL STUDENT

*The Magazine of THE LEAGUE OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS*

REV. CALVIN KNOX CUMMINGS, *Editor*

Volume XII Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January, 1937

No. 1

## EDITORIAL

### CHRISTIAN LOVE

There is much talk today about love. The quintessence of the Christian religion, we are told, is "love thy neighbour." And by this is usually meant simply an earnest desire and effort to help those in need. On the surface this may sound very pious, for the true Christian does seek to help those in want. But when examined in the light of the true Christian love of the Old and New Testaments we see what a complete sham, what an utter farce this modern concept of love is. We see that the love of which the Modernist speaks is the precise opposite of Christian love. Far from being sweet and tender it is hatefully cruel toward men. It dishonors God, and despises truth.

The paramount need in the world and the Church is not less love but more love—more truly Christian love. What is Christian love and wherein does it differ from the current misrepresentation of it?

Christian love is love primarily toward God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" was Christ's summary of the first and great commandments. Christianity from beginning to end is theocentric. God has created us. God has preserved us. As Christians God has redeemed us. All we are and have is of God. Therefore we should love Him. O how the heart of the infinite God must ache as he hears men talking glibly about love, love, love and they never love Him. The early Christians coveted above all else the Lord their God. At all cost they "must obey God rather than men." This love toward God manifested itself in unswerving loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and in righteous indignation when the honor and glory of their God was being trampled under foot. Because of their love for Him they could not but hate unbelief and sin which opposed Him.

True Christian love requires love for the truth. Paul, the great Apostle of the Christian Faith coveted and loved the truth. We see him in Athens among the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who were given over to "the unknown god." When Paul saw error he opposed it and zealously upheld the truth. His epistles ring with a great love for and devotion to the truth. There are many today who contend—yes we believe as you do but we do not believe in contending as you do. We may concede for the sake of argument that they do believe as we do, although in many instances it is very apparent that they do not even believe as we do. But there is one thing that we cannot possibly concede; it is that these men love the truth. For if a Christian loves the truth he will stand for that truth and contend for that truth no matter what the consequence.

Christian love involves love for the souls of men. But for the Christian this means something vastly more than and radically different from that which is meant by the Modernist. The Christian learns from the Bible that men are lost, helpless sinners abiding under the just wrath of God. He knows that the greatest cry of the human heart is "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" For the Christian it is cruel mockery to ignore this fundamental and primary need of every human heart. Realizing man's greatest need and filled with a com-

We do not know how it will come, but we believe we are on the verge of a mighty spiritual awakening in this university, and we give thanks to God for answering our prayers and sending Mr. Orr to us at the very time we needed his message.

---

## THE SOURCE OF SALVATION—A DEVOTIONAL MEDITATION

JOHN MURRAY, M.A., TH.M.

*"Knowing brethren, beloved of God, your election." (I Thess. 1:4)*

Salvation is of the Lord. The fact of salvation flows from the purpose of salvation. What God accomplishes in fact He has eternally ordained to accomplish. The whole body of the saved who will at the last day be presented faultless before the presence of the Father will be co-extensive with the body of those, who, according to the eternal purpose, were elected to that end. All in whom salvation is realised are in the last analysis saved because God chose them in Christ unto salvation.

No man knows the whole company of the elect. Only God has knowledge comprehensive enough to know them that are His. His knowing of them as His does not begin with the actual accomplishment of salvation. He knows them as His from eternal ages. His knowledge of them as such is not consequent upon His foresight of their penitence, faith and perseverance. Rather is it the case that His knowledge of them as penitent and believing is consequent upon His knowledge of them as elect. They are elected not because of faith, nor because of foresight of faith, but they are elect unto faith, repentance, and perseverance unto the end. Peter says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:2). Paul says, "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. 1:4, 5).

There is, it is true, no temporal sequence in the divine thought. He knows the end from the beginning. Accessions are not constantly being made to the divine knowledge. Such a thought would be inconsistent with His omniscience and the perfection of His knowledge. But though there is no temporal sequence in the divine thought, we must believe that there is a logical order. In the order of causation, though not in the order of time, election is prior to the purpose to give to the elect that repentance and faith and new obedience which realise the end of electing grace. The order of divine thought, then, is from the fountain which is electing love, to the stream which is faith, repentance, love, and new obedience. The divine thought, therefore, one might say works downstream; it proceeds from the root to the fruit.

Though no man knows who the whole body of the elect are, and though no man can know who of unbelievers are elect of God and who are not, yet man can come to know elect persons. Paul affirms that he knows these Thessalonian believers are elect of God. How did he attain to that knowledge?

The answer is that it is just in the reverse order of what we have found to be in a very transcendent and inimitable sense the order of the divine thought.

God's thought in this matter proceeds downstream, human thought works upstream. Divine thought, not in the sequences of time but in that of supra-temporal causation, proceeds from the root to the fruits, human thought proceeds from the fruits to the root. In God the order is from election to the fruits in faith and love, in man it is from the fruits of faith and love to election. Human thought proceeds from the stream to the fountain.

Paul was not given an immediate perception or revelation to the effect that these Thessalonians were elect. His knowledge of their election was mediated by his perception of certain fruits, fruits which never proceed from any other root than that of divine election. His knowledge was an inference based upon certain evidence. That evidence consisted in the manifestations of grace that appeared in the Thessalonian Church—the work of faith, the labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel came not unto them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance. These manifestations of grace were connected, Paul knew, with an eternal purpose of God. By an unbreakable chain the divine calling realised in time is joined to the two poles of eternal election and eternal glory. "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8:29, 30).

Just as it is with our knowledge of others as elect, so it must be with knowledge of ourselves as such. The knowledge of ourselves as elect of God must be mediated through the fruits of grace manifested in our hearts and lives. Endless confusion and perplexity arise from our failure to appreciate this truth. Immediate knowledge belongs to God, and for us to aim at it is to arrogate to ourselves divine prerogatives. Our thought and knowledge must work upstream. We can never as unbelievers know our election of God. God does not reveal to an unbeliever that he or she is elect. It cannot be required, therefore, of an unbeliever as an article to be accepted and acted upon that he or she is elect. What is revealed to the unbeliever and the demand that is made upon his faith is the gospel in all its fulness and freeness. The knowledge of our own individual election does not constitute any part of the warrant of faith. It is not as persons antecedently aware of our election by God that we repent and believe the gospel, but as sinners destitute of grace and subject to the wrath and curse of God even as others. The warrant we have for believing in Jesus' name is the invitation, demand, promise and sufficiency of the gospel freely proffered to us. When by the grace of God the gospel is accepted and the obedience of faith is rendered to the call, then we may become assured of our election. We may know it as an inference from the manifestations of grace and the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts.

When by the grace of God we follow the faith of divine revelation to us and adopt the divinely ordained order of knowledge for us, then we shall come to the conviction and appropriation of the amazing truth, that out of the boundless depths of unspeakable goodness and love before the foundations of the world were laid, God chose us in Christ unto salvation. What otherwise is a perplexing enigma becomes to us a disclosure of amazing love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." And we shall be constrained to exclaim, "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."