

A Love That Will Not Let Go

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“I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.” Psalm 116:1–2

It was in the midst of a severe personal crisis in 1882, that George Matheson, then just forty years of age, penned the familiar words of this time-proven hymn:

**O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.**

It was an acknowledgement of the Lord’s deep love for him as well as his own searching, self-confession that verbalized his commitment to give back to the Lord so that his life might “richer, fuller be”. The fact that he composed the hymn in less than five minutes by his own testimony is the irrefutable evidence of the fruit that remains when it comes down the path of suffering and through the valley of the Shadow.

The Love of Christ

In writing to the Ephesians, Paul prayed that they might be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the “breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ...”, Eph. 3:18-19. As we examine the manifold grace of God in salvation, we only begin to see the magnitude and scintillation of God’s deep love for us in Christ, a love that indeed is “vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!”. At best, we only see the edges of His glory. Nevertheless, it fills our hearts with wonder as we consider His amazing grace (and is one of the reasons why we include the “Salvation Stories” column in every issue of this magazine). This love is at work long before our salvation (2 Thess. 2:13) and is evident all the way through our journey with Him, John 13:1. It is truly a love that will not let us go despite our failures, as Peter and others well knew. It is a love that will keep us from falling (Jude 24), will not allow us to be separated from Him (Rom. 8:39), and is the basis of the certainty and security of our salvation. (For more on this topic, see George Ferrier’s article: “*Double-Knotted Security*” in the March issue). To realize that I am my Beloved and His desire is toward me, and that His banner over me is love should make us exult in the Lord and join with the psalmist in saying, “...*I will call upon Him as long as I live!*”. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!

Drawing Near

With such a love like this, the only reasonable response from us is to give Him our all. How so? The answer is by drawing near and abiding in Him. The Shulamite stated of the bridegroom, “*I sat down under his shade with great delight*”, Song 2:3. That should be our response as well for

the One who loves us to the end. Martha was a server and busy for the Lord but Mary was a learner who sat at His feet to take in the teaching from the Master. It demonstrated her deep desire to spend time in His presence, an enjoyment that would not be taken away from her, Luke 10:42. Are we doing the same? Love for the Lord comes not so much from the messages we “hear” as it does from the messages we apply - musing upon His mercy and grace, drawing near to Him and staying close by His side. There are many disciples that sit around the table, but only one that leaned upon His bosom. When David’s mighty men were acknowledged for their achievements and feats of bravery on the battlefield, it was a special group of three men that attained the highest honors among their peers. They were the cream of the cream of the crop, 2 Sam. 23:14-17. What was their achievement? It was to penetrate behind enemy lines at risk of their lives to get a drink of water for their king. David had a longing for the water from the well of Bethlehem, his own town that at the time was under the control of the Philistines. The ambition of these three men were to meet the desire of their king. Many of David’s men performed outstanding feats of heroism – some defeated the enemy single-handedly, one slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day, but none attained to the achievement of these three men that issued out of love for their leader. Service for the Lord is important, as are many other things in the Christian life, but the highest occupation and the greatest activity is love for the Savior and worship of Him this truly is the highest occupation and should be the spiritual impetus behind everything we do for our King. The evangelist D. L. Moody said, “*Before I was saved, I worked toward the Cross, but after the Cross I worked from it*”. He came to learn that salvation was by grace alone, but service proceeded out of love for “that Man of Calvary.” Deepening our love for Christ should be like Ezekiel stepping into river of God (Ezek. 47), progressing until fully immersed. The Love that does not let us go should respond with a love that does not let Him go.

In this issue, Randy Amos instructs us on the spiritual lessons from the various brides of Scripture, while Willie Burnett shares with us gleanings from John 21 and the lessons from the Lord’s recommissioning of Peter - searching words to the apostle and us. We have another interesting account of the Lord’s work of salvation in the life of Gerrit Schakelaar during the days of World War II and Wade Le Blanc gives us a powerful report on the mighty hand of God working among the prison population in Kenya, Africa. Be sure also to catch the poem, “*The Man in the Glory*” on the back page. It is a thoughtful look of the One who is working all the time on our behalf – the One whom we do not see now, but one day will and when we do, we will rejoice even more with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

*More love to Thee, O Christ, more love to Thee! Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee.
This is my earnest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee; More love to Thee, more love to Thee!*