

Notes of Sermons Preached by Pastor Henry Haddow at Brockham Green
on Lord's day January 15th 1911

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep. (John 21:7)

Morning Sermon

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9) He left heaven, veiled His deity in human flesh, became a child among men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He hid not His face from spiting and shame. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He gave His life a ransom for many. He gave His life that they might have life, and life more abundantly. *Greater love hath no man than this. Jesus Christ died for sinners. Whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us. He was made sin who knew no sin. O mystery of mysteries! There was no sin in Him, but sin was laid upon Him. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.*

He appeared unto His disciples after His resurrection, and in the chapter which we read (*John 21*) we are told this was the third time He appeared unto a number of His disciples. They are going fishing. There is something very remarkable, friends, in this. Peter the spokesman, so to speak, finding that the Lord had not engaged him immediately to go and preach, he said: *I go a fishing.* And then the others said: *We also go with thee.* All the night they caught nothing. My soul was led in meditation last evening. I saw the disciples fishing all night, and catching nothing. And it came to my mind that there was One that was an eyewitness to all this. He knew the thoughts and exercises of these fishermen. He saw them, though they saw not Him. There is something very sweet in this. The eye of Jesus is ever upon His people. You may labour and catch nothing. He sympathises with His people in all they are called to pass through in the wilderness. The Lord's hand is not in everything His people undertake. They may not succeed in business. They may sit up late, and rise early, and get nothing. *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. (Proverbs 16:33)* *In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:6)* *Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. (Psalm 37:3)*

When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. It is very remarkable that, even after the Lord spoke to them, they did not know Him. When He appeared to them in the upper room at Jerusalem, they did not know that it was the Lord. The hand of God was in it. His glory will be manifest by His miracles. But before we pass on, let me say that Jesus is not unconcerned as to your welfare. The Lord knows what you have need of. O what a mercy it is, not only to have the bread which perisheth, but to have meat to eat the world knows nothing of!

*Never did angels taste above,
Redeeming grace and dying love. (Isaac Watts)*

This is reserved for Christ's purchased flock.

Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? And when they answered Him, No, He said: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. The Lord knew where to direct the net to be cast. The thought came to my mind that He knows where to direct His servants to cast the gospel net. When the disciples were bidden of God, they cast the net on the right side of the ship, and the net was full. *They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.* When John said to his friend Peter, *It is the Lord,* that was enough for Peter. He was ready to let the ship go, and he cast himself into the sea so as to get to the Lord quickly. This is the man who denied Him with oaths and curses. There was love in Peter's heart for Christ.

*If once the love of Christ we feel
Upon our hearts impressed,
The mark of that celestial seal
Can never be erased. (William Hammond)*

Those in the other boat helped the disciples to get the fish to land. They find the Lord Jesus Christ there, and He says: *Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.* I have thought He had some fish, and so they ate, so to speak, the fish that Christ ate. *Come and dine.* O what a sight! The risen Saviour dining with these disciples that had denied Him, and one with oaths and curses.

And when they had dined, He put a question to Simon. There is something remarkable here. You do not find it recorded in the Word of God that Jesus ever upbraided Peter for having denied Him. He sends a special message to him: *Go... tell His disciples and Peter.* (Mark 16:7) The Lord knew what was working in Peter's mind.. Now He puts the question to him: *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?* Peter had said: *Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.* (Matthew 26:33,35) It was as though Peter would say: If all these disciples forsake Thee, I will not. Peter says: *Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.* The Lord says: *Feed My lambs.* The word *love* here means *fondly love.* *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?* The Lord does not put it the second time: *Lovest thou me more than these?* The Lord said unto him: *Feed My sheep.* And then, the third time, He says: *Lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved that He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me?* And Peter appeals to Him, and says: *Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.* The Lord says: *Feed My sheep.*

He knew what was in Peter; He knew how much of the old man there was in Peter, and He knew how much of the new man of grace. There was in Peter a company of two armies. You know, some of you, what that is. You say, *When I would do good, evil is present.* The Lord knew all that was working in poor Peter's mind. When the Lord put the question the third time, doubtless it brought to remembrance that he had thrice denied his Lord. Peter was honest when he said: *Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will not I.* He spoke in the warmth of his feelings, and he did not think for one moment that he would be left to deny Him. Sometimes you feel you could go through anything for Christ's sake. Unless God keeps you, you are gone in a moment. You sin with your lips and with your tongue. You go with the company of the ungodly, and you seem to sanction what has been said. And this brings guilt and condemnation into the conscience. We need to be kept every second. Unless the Lord keeps the man in the pulpit every second – he is deeply conscious of this – he will fall. Give me grace to live a life of faith on the Son of God. But Peter did forsake His Lord and Master, and was an eyewitness to His sufferings. Well, Jesus will have him confess three times that he loves Him. He knew he loved Him, though he had denied Him. Why, it was with His own love. Peter loved Jesus with the love God gave him, and nothing could destroy that love.

My dear friends, let us for a moment leave Peter, and come to our own individual case.

*Hark! my soul, it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee:
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?" (William Cowper)*

Let me ask you this all-important question: Do you love Him? What answer would you give? What answer shall I give to my Lord concerning the question I put to you when I bear you before the Lord? Is His love shed abroad in your heart by the power of the Holy Ghost? There are four things that love is compared to: sickness, jealousy, the grave, and it is stronger than death. Do you know anything of love sickness? There is that love sickness when the Lord hides Himself from you. You know if you love a person you want to be in the company of that person. I have read of an old divine who, when

he entered the room where his wife was, it would fill him with love. That is the love of the creature – what must the love of God be? If you love Jesus you want to be in His presence. Can you say: *We would see Jesus?* Do you long to be in His embrace, and feel how His heart does beat, and view the purple tide, and sing His love in every breath? I believe some of you do, and you can give a real reason why you love Him. *I love the Lord*, says the psalmist, *because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. (Psalm 116:1)* The banner of love has been cast upon you, and you look back to that time, and you say: O that it would be with me as in the days that are past! And you come to the house of prayer if so be He will condescend to reveal Himself. The very burden of your prayer is: *Jesus, reveal Thyself to me.* If there were no grace in you, there would not be that going out of soul after Him. The devil may tell you that you have neither part nor lot in the matter – but he is a liar. Jesus would not be the one thing needful if you were out of the secret. You can say:

*I could from all things parted be,
But never, never, Lord, from Thee. (Samuel Medley)*

Do you know anything of this love sickness? The church knows about it, and it has been the experience of this poor man that is trying to speak to you. If you are a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, do not I tell you the truth when I say you do not want Jesus? Every partaker of grace, every lamb in the fold, wants Jesus, and cannot do without Him. There are those here who have seen Him here, and crowned Him Lord of all. I believe I have had times of refreshing here, and have been able to say, This is the house of God, and the gate of heaven. And as you have been singing in your hymn of praise, to inspire your souls with love:

*Till your full soul can hold no more
Of everlasting love. (Elliott & Toplady)*

I remember preaching some thirty years ago at Stoke Golding near Leicester. There was one old lady there above eighty years of age – one does not like to speak of one's own ministry – but after the service she came and asked me to come home with her. And then she told me that whilst I was preaching the Lord so filled her soul with love that she had to ask Him to stay His hand. Now we cannot bear much whilst we are at home in the body, but when you are at home with the Lord you will bask in the sunbeams of His love.

Unto Him be power, and majesty, and wisdom. Amen.

Afternoon Sermon

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep. (John 21:7)

As you were singing, I wondered of how many of you it was true:

*“Thou shalt see My glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of My throne shalt be;
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?” (William Cowper)*

If the work of grace is begun, the work of grace will be finished. And if you have ever known what it is honestly to say to God: *Show me Thy glory*, it is true of you. You shall –

- live to reach the place
Where He unveils His lovely face,
Where all His beauties you behold,
And sing His Name to harps of gold. (Isaac Watts)

Grace in the heart of a poor sinner shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life. Jesus Christ is eternal life. What is Jesus Christ to you? A solemn question to put to dying men and women. Christ put this question to professors: *What think ye of Christ?* I wish I could put into words what I have felt.

As they draw near their journey's end –
every day brings you nearer – *As they draw near their journey's end,*
How precious is their heavenly Friend!
And when in death they bow their head,
He's precious on a dying bed. (Samuel Medley)

When we sat down this morning we were speaking of the love of God in the soul, and that there were two kinds of love-sickness. Perhaps there are not many in this house of prayer who have been so ravished with love as to be ready to lay you down and die, and find eternal rest. There may be one here and another there, even in this small company. How sweet and how blessed it is for the love of God to be shed abroad in the heart! It makes one say: "Why me, why me, the most unworthy and unlikely?" God is a sovereign. His love is rich, and full, and free, *fixed on His own eternally*. He loves because He would love. We hear now and again of some being much favoured in their last hours. And it makes you call upon the Lord after this manner: *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! (Numbers 23:20)* Love is compared to the grave. The grave is ever calling, Give, give! *Many waters cannot quench love. If a man will give the whole substance of his house for love it is contemned. (Song of Solomon 8:7)* It is God's gift.

O what a mercy of all mercies it is to be able to answer such a question as this: *Lovest thou Me?* I do love that hymn, and the question with which it begins:

Hark, my soul! it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word:
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee:
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou Me?" (William Cowper)

O what is your answer? Do you love the Lord? Can you say: *Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee?* Peter was grieved when the question was put to him the third time; doubtless it reminded him of when he denied the Lord three times. You cannot hide anything from Jesus Christ. It was not that He did not know what was in Peter's heart, but He will have him confess it. Peter said: *Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee* – that I fondly love Thee. The Lord knew Peter's heart was upon Him. The love which Christ gave to Peter – he never lost it. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, though that soul may be called to pass through trials and afflictions, nothing can destroy it, though sometimes it may seem there is no love. Men may say, "Does this man love? – he has denied his Lord!" The child of God may sink very low. I do thank God for the scriptures. Do you? I thank God for all the experiences and the fallings and departures of His people that are recorded in His blessed Word. God left some that He might know all that was in their hearts. A man soon falls.

If ever it could come to pass,
That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day;
Were not Thy love as firm as free,
Thou soon wouldst take it, Lord, from me. (Joseph Hart)

Though a child of God may be left to fall, he cannot finally perish. It is impossible, for he is kept by the power of God. A just man falls seven times a day. Where will you find one that has not known something of falling? *Jude* says: *Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power. (v.24,25)*

Peter got into the devil's sieve, and he gave him a terrible shaking. Some of us have known something of this, and we thought the Lord would come in a terrible way and manner. But very often Jesus comes in the very opposite way to which we expect Him. It was not in a terrible way with Peter. He did not say, "You are a vile man – you have denied Me with oaths and curses," but He says: *Lovest thou Me?* Sometimes He comes very tenderly when we have been expecting Him to come in a terrible way. He comes stealing over one, so to speak, and says: *Lovest thou Me?* And such a sweet feeling is produced in the soul, and we reply:

*Do not I love Thee, dearest Lord?
Behold my heart, and see;
And cast each hated idol down,
That dares to rival Thee. (Philip Doddridge)*

The soul in a moment can appeal thus to the searcher of the heart: *Do not I love Thee?* This is as if the soul can say in that moment, "Lord, take me just as I am, be my all and in all."

Now perhaps there are some here who dare not say that you love the Lord. I do feel this, and I have given utterance to it in this pulpit before. God makes the child of grace honest. He cannot lie before God. He dare not. He knows God sees him through and through. *Thou God seest me* is the name by which he knows God. If you cannot say you love Him, perhaps you dare say this – that you want to love Him. You say, "I think I know my heart aright. I desire to love Him." From whence does it spring? Is it from nature? No, no! A man's natural feelings may be wrought upon, but this is quite a different thing, for there is not that earnest desire after the Lord. To be honest, you would not sin. You do not want to be in the company of the ungodly. You say, "I want the company of the Lord's people, if I am not one of them." You feel you are a stranger to the experience of God's people. Solomon prayed for the stranger. You want to enjoy the things they enjoy, and to have fellowship and communion with the Son of God, as they have. And you can say to Him, "Lord, Thou knowest I desire to love Thee." I remember my dear father on his dying bed – it is sweet to look back and behold him then – I remember him saying that, if the Lord was to appear to him as He did to Peter, he could say: *Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.*

Perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:18) When the soul is perfect in love, that soul has no slavish fear; that soul reverences the name of the Lord, and His name is hallowed in that heart. O to be able to say: *Thou knowest that I love Thee!* Is this the desire of your soul, that you may use such language as this before you die? Then I believe you will.

Jesus said unto Peter: *Feed My sheep.* The Lord bid him after his first confession of love: *Feed My lambs.* After the second, He says: *Feed My sheep.* And after he has for the third time declared his love, He says: *Feed My sheep.* Jesus cares much for the lambs, and He cares much for the sheep. He would never send forth a man to feed the lambs if he did not love Him. An hireling would flee – he would not care for the sheep. He would feed himself, but the sheep might die of hunger. Where there is love to Christ the lambs will be fed.

*Hast Thou a lamb in all Thy flock
I would disdain to feed?
Hast Thou a foe before whose face
I'd fear Thy cause to plead? (Philip Doddridge)*

It is written in the Word of God that *the lambs feed after their manner.* (Isaiah 5:17) Jesus knows what the lambs need. There are lambs in this flock, and my desire is ministerially to feed you. The Lord knows my heart.

*Ye lambs of Christ's fold, ye weaklings in faith,
Who long to lay hold on life by His death;
Who fain would believe Him, and in your best room
Would gladly receive Him, but fear to presume... (Joseph Hart)*

O our Shepherd, our Jesus, cares much for you. He loves you. He has gone through seas of suffering for you, and He has risen for your justification. He has ascended to the right hand of the Father to demand your salvation. He bids His servant find you. There are some very precious promises in the Word of God to you. *A bruised reed shall He not break.* (Isaiah 42:3) *All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.* (John 6:37) You lambs, He loves you; He bids you knock at mercy's door. *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.* (Matthew 5:4)

Feed My lambs, Peter. He could trust the lambs in Peter's care. Where there is love to Christ, there will be love to the child of Christ. Let there be the bleatings of the lambs, and the servants of the Lord will be ready to go at any cost to feed the lambs. The lambs are very precious to Christ. It will cost man something if he is to feed the flock of slaughter. He will need the love of God to be shed abroad in his heart that he may go forth in season and out of season to feed the lambs and the sheep. The shepherd has to go in all weathers to feed the flock. The ministers, so to speak, have to go at all times to feed the lambs. The Lord feeds the flock sometimes by the rod of affliction, and He makes use of under-shepherds in feeding the flock. How sweet it is when the flock and the minister feed together, and Jesus Christ Himself is there!

Picture the scene, friends, before we leave the subject, when the Lord Jesus Christ goes to His disciples, and feeds with them. Look at it after this manner. These are feeding places, as far as the sheep are concerned, and then He feeds them together. The Lord says: *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* (Song of Solomon 5:1) The fruit is sweet to their taste. Whatever it cost Peter, he was willing, for the love he had for his dear Master, to go through all sufferings to feed the lambs and sheep. And His servants have a measure of the same grace given to them. Whatever difficulties are in the way, they are willing to go the way the Lord directs them to feed the lambs, and to feed the sheep. God is not unmindful of this labour of love. As I was reading last week, He looks down from heaven and beholds every cup of cold water that is given to the lambs and to the sheep. The time will come when He will say: *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.* (Matthew 25:40)

May the Lord add His blessing.