

THE COMPASSIONATE CHRIST

by J. J. Tisdall

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."—Matt. 9 : 36.

Compassion was born of God. It is the golden thread of pity running from the eternal looms of our Father to the human heart. It became matchless in beauty and power when it culminated in the glorious weaving of the gift of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, his Son. Herein we find the height of compassionate love—John 3: 16. Is it any wonder that Christ should be known as the compassionate Saviour?

What a heart of compassion beat in the bosom of our blessed Master! He saw the multitudes in need, scattered, fainting, alone. Why? There was no one to lead them. Each one was so self-centered in his own pursuit that he gave no thought for others. The cry of Cain was on their lips, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Even the Jewish church was so engrossed in the observation of ceremonial law and ecclesiastical dogma that they neither heard nor even saw their brother in distress. (Note the story of the good Samaritan.) How different With the blessed Master! He went about doing good. When he saw the multitudes he had compassion on them (Matt. 9:35, 36).

We would divide our theme into three parts; namely, 1. The breadth of the compassion of Christ. 2. The strength of the compassion of Christ. 3. The never-failing compassion of Christ.

First: *The compassion of Christ is broad.* Christ saw multitudes. What a vision! The church fails today because it lacks this vision. "Multitudes means missions," not foreign nor home, but the world—all people—at home and abroad. Climb to the mountain-top of opportunity and see the world holding up their! hands and pitifully beseeching help. Feed them—help them—they are starving and dying because you are neglecting your duty, yea, more than that, your privilege. To omit this chance marks you as not compassionate and therefore not a disciple of Christ. The compassionate Jesus ought to be living also in the person of those who claim to be his followers. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The law of Christi is love.

Second: *The compassion of Christ is strong.* Our weakness appeals to the tender heart of Jesus Christ. No more beautiful description of this can be found than in his reference to the multitude's need of a shepherd. The prophet Isaiah (40:11) said: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom; he shall gently lead those that are with young." What tender mercy to the weak; what sympathetic love, benignant in its sweetness. Tender because it never breaks the bruised reed, nor quenches the feeblest spark.

There is more weakness than strength in this world. Once in awhile you will find

some giant soul towering above his fellow-men, because he has gotten close to the Master and seen the vision, but the frail reeds and rushes are without number. Should this discourage us? *No, no.* We have ever waiting, to help and strengthen us, that kind, loving heart of the divine Strength—Jesus. The same sympathizing Jesus who raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus ; the widow's son of Nain ; his friend Lazarus; who pitied the famished multitudes and rescued the sinking Peter—is living yet. His love is as full as ever.

Third: *The compassion of Christ is inexhaustible.* Human pity wears out from overuse. It often gives way when under the heaviest strain. Compassion dwells in the heart of Christ as inexhaustible as the sunlight. He never fails us, but we fail him. When we pray right we take hold on that compassion. Why do we allow the tender and sympathetic power to leave us?

1. *We become self-centered.* Churches as well as individuals fail here. If the compassionate Christ should come into some of our churches, I believe that he would order more than one self-satisfied member to go out and find some soul in distress, work in some mission school or assist some struggling church to its feet. What does the Lord make some of his followers rich for except that they may lend a helping hand to the weak and helpless?

2. *We neglect Bible reading and prayer.* To be in sympathy with the needs of the world we must study the Bible and pray (Matt. 9: 38). A church or person that makes it a rule to daily sit at the feet of the Master to learn of him will pray and work. We never can fulfill the "law of Christ" till we know the law (Ps. 1).

3. *Engrossed in worldly pursuits and happiness.* Great calamities open our hearts to relief and help. What greater disaster than the loss of a human soul? Christ exerted his divine might and infinite love in bearing the load of man's sin and sorrow. He never considered self. "He came to minister, not to be ministered unto." The greatest happiness is derived from helping others. God intends us to give attention to the affairs of the world, but never to become so absorbed in them that we hear not the cry of those in need. Would you be consecrated? Then listen. Consecration means copying the compassionate Christ. We are a debt to the poor, the weak, the feeble, the sick, the ignorant the fallen and the perishing. May the love of Jesus Christ inspire us to noble deeds and help us to pay our debts to our fellow-man.

The compassionate heart of Jesus calls to you, my friend. Will you not answer his call and give him your heart?

"Like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o'er land and sea;
And laden souls by thousands meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to thee."

