

'Love and I' A Mystery

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon reveals that the deepest Christian mystery is the mutual indwelling of God's love in believers and Christ in them, grounded in knowing the righteous and merciful Father through Christ.

Scripture: John 17:26, John 14:6, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:8, Psalm 103:8, Hebrews 12:2, John 6:44

Topics: "Divine Love", "Knowledge of God", "Atonement"

Description

In 'Love and I' A Mystery, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound and divine love that unites believers with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Through an expository approach, Spurgeon unpacks Jesus' final prayer, emphasizing the necessity of knowing God's righteous and merciful character to truly love Him. The sermon calls believers to deepen their knowledge of God through the Holy Spirit, leading to a transformative union with Christ. Rich in theological insight and pastoral warmth, this message invites Christians to experience the fullness of God's love as the ultimate spiritual treasure.

Transcript

'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' John 17:26.

FOR SEVERAL SABBATH MORNINGS my mind has been directed into subjects which I might fitly call the deep things of God. I think I have never felt my own incompetence more fully than in trying to handle such subjects. It is a soil into which one may dig and dig as deep as ever you will, and still never exhaust the golden nuggets which lie within it. I am, however, comforted by this fact, that these subjects are so fruitful that even we who can only scratch the surface of them shall yet get a harvest from them. I read once of the plains of India, that they were so fertile that you had only to tickle them with a hoe and they laughed with plenty, and surely such a text as this may be described as equally fruitful, even under our feeble husbandry. Pearls lie on the surface here as well as in the depth. We have only to search its surface, and stir the soil a little, and we shall be astonished at the plenitude of spiritual wealth which lies before us. Oh, that the Spirit of God may help us to enjoy the blessed truths which are herein set forth! Here is the priceless treasure, but it lies hid till he reveals it to us.

You see, this text is taken out of our Lord's last prayer with his disciples. He did as good as say, 'I am about to leave you, I am about to die for you; and for a while you will not see me; but now, before we separate, let us pray.' It is one of those impulses that you have felt yourselves. When you have been about to part from those you love, to leave them perhaps in danger and difficulty, you have felt you could

do no less than say, 'Let us draw nigh unto God.' Your heart found no way of expressing itself at all so fitting, so congenial, so satisfactory as to draw near unto the great Father and spread the case before him. Now, a prayer from such a one as Jesus, our Lord and Master; a prayer in such a company, with the eleven whom he had chosen, and who had consorted with him from the beginning; a prayer under such circumstances, when he was just on the brink of the brook of Cedron, and was about to cross that gloomy stream and go up to Calvary, and there lay down his life'such a prayer as this, so living, earnest, loving and divine, deserves the most studious meditations of all believers. I invite you to bring hither your best thoughts and skill for the navigation of this sea. It is not a creek or bay, but the main ocean itself. We cannot hope to fathom its depths. This is true of any sentence of this matchless prayer; but for me the work of exposition becomes unusually heavy, because my text is the close and climax of this marvellous supplication: it is the central mystery of all. In the lowest depth there is still a lower deep, and this verse is one of those deeps which still exceed the rest. Oh, how much we want the Spirit of God. Pray for his bedewing: pray that his balmy influences may descend upon us richly now.

You will observe that the last word of our Lord's prayer is concerning love. This is the last petition which he offers, 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' He reaches no greater height than this, namely, that his people be filled with the Father's love. How could he rise higher? For this is to be filled with all the fulness of God, since God is love, and he that loveth dwelleth in God and God in him. What importance ought you and I to attach to the grace of love! How highly we should esteem that which Jesus makes the crown jewel of all. If we have faith, let us not be satisfied unless our faith worketh by love and purifieth the soul. Let us not be content indeed until the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Well did the poet say,

'Only love to us be given,

Lord, we ask no other heaven;'

for indeed there is no other heaven below, and scarcely is there any other heaven above than to reach to the fulness of perfect love. This is where the prayer of the Son of David ends, in praying 'that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.' What a subject! The highest that even our Lord Jesus reached in his noblest prayer. Again with groanings my heart cries, Holy Spirit, help.

I shall this morning try to speak first upon the food of love, or what love lives upon; secondly, upon the love itself, what kind of love it is; and then, thirdly, upon the companion of love. 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

I. First, THE FOOD OF LOVE to God: what is it? It is knowledge. 'I have made known unto them thy name, and will make it known.' We cannot love a God whom we do not know: a measure of knowledge is needful to affection. However lovely God may be, a man blind of soul cannot perceive him, and therefore is not touched by his loveliness. Only when the eyes are opened to behold the loveliness of God will the heart go out towards God who is so desirable an object for the affections. Brethren, we must know in order to believe; we must know in order to hope; and we must especially know in order to love. Hence the great desirableness that you should know the Lord, and his great love which passeth knowledge. You cannot reciprocate love which you have never known, even as a man cannot derive strength from food which he has not eaten. Till first of all the love of God has come into your heart, and you have been made a partaker of it, you cannot rejoice in it or return it. Therefore our Lord took care to feed his disciples' hearts upon the Father's name. He laboured to make the Father known to them. This is one of his great efforts with them,

and he is grieved when he sees their ignorance, and has to say to one of them, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?' Study much, then, the word of God: be diligent in turning the pages of Scripture and in hearing God's true ministers, that the flame of love within your hearts may be revived by the fuel of holy knowledge which you place upon it. Pile on the logs of sandal wood, and let the perfumed fires burn before the Lord. Heap on the handfuls of frankincense and sweet odours of sacred knowledge, that on the altar of your heart there may always be burning the sacred flame of love to God in Christ Jesus.

The knowledge here spoken of is a knowledge which Jesus gave them. 'I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.' O beloved, it is not knowledge that you and I pick up as a matter of book learning that will ever bring out our love to the Father: it is knowledge given us by Christ through his Spirit. It is not knowledge communicated by the preacher alone which will bless you; for however much he may be taught of God himself, he cannot preach to the heart unless the blessed Spirit of God comes and takes of the things that are spoken, and reveals them and makes them manifest to each individual heart, so that in consequence it knows the Lord. Jesus said, 'O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee,' and you and I would have been in the same condition, strangers to God, without God and without hope in the world, if the Spirit of God had not taken of divine things and applied them to our souls so that we are made to know them. Every living word of knowledge is the work of the living God. If you only know what you have found out for yourself, or picked up by your own industry apart from Jesus, you know nothing aright: it must be by the direct and distinct teaching of God the Holy Ghost that you must learn to profit. Jesus Christ alone can reveal the Father. He himself said, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me.' He that knows not Christ knows not the Father; but when Jesus Christ reveals him, ah! then we do know him after a special, personal, peculiar, inward knowledge. This knowledge brings with it a life and a love with which the soul is not puffed up, but built up. By such knowledge we grow up into him in all things who is our head, being taught of the Son of God.

This knowledge, dear friends, comes to us gradually. The text indicates this. 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.' As if, though they knew the Father, there was far more to know and the Lord Jesus was resolved to teach them more. Are you growing in knowledge, my brothers and sisters? My labour is lost if you are not growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hope you know much more of God than you did twenty years ago when first you came to him. That little knowledge which you received by grace when you found 'life in a look at the Crucified One' has saved you; but in these after years you have added to your faith knowledge, and to your knowledge experience; you have gone on to know more deeply what you knew before, and to know the details of what you seemed to know in the gross and the lump at first. You have come to look into things as well as upon things: a look at Christ saves; but oh, it is the look into Christ that wins the heart's love and holds it fast and binds us to him as with fetters of gold. We ought every day to be adding something to this inestimably precious store, that as we are known of God so we may know God, and become thereby transformed from glory unto glory through his Spirit.

Are you not thankful for this blessed word of the Lord Jesus: 'I will declare it': 'I will make it known'? He did do so at his resurrection, when he taught his people things they knew not before; but he did so much more after he had ascended up on high when the Spirit of God was given. 'He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' And now to-day in the hearts of

his people he is daily teaching us something that we do not know. All our experience tends that way. When the Spirit of God blesses an affliction to us, it is one of the Saviour's illuminated books out of which we learn something more of the Father's name, and consequently come to love him better: for that is the thing Christ aims at. He would so make known the Father, that the love wherewith the Father hath loved him may be in us, and that he himself may be in us.

This knowledge distinguishes us from the world. It is the mark by which the elect are made manifest. In the sixth verse of this chapter our Lord says: 'I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.' The world does not know the Father, and cannot know him, for it abides in the darkness and death of sin. Judge yourselves therefore by this sure test, and let the love which grows out of gracious knowledge be a token for good unto you.

Now let me try to show you what the Saviour meant when he said, 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare.' This knowledge which breeds love is knowledge of the name of God. What does he mean by 'Thy name.' Now, I do not think I should preach an unprofitable sermon if I were to stop with the connection and say that the 'name' here meant is specially the name used in the twenty-fifth verse: 'O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.' This is the name which we most need to know 'righteous Father.' Observe the singular combination. Righteous and yet a Father. 'Righteous': to us poor sinners that is a word of terror when first we hear it. 'Father,' oh, how sweet. That is a word of good cheer even to us prodigals; but we are afraid to lay hold upon it, for our sins arise, and conscience protests that God must be righteous, and punish sin. Our joy begins when we see the two united: 'righteous Father,' a Father full of love, and nothing but love, to his people, and yet righteous as a Judge, as righteous as if he were no Father. Dealing out his righteousness with stern severity as the Judge of all the earth must do, and yet a Father at the same time. I do protest that I never did love God at all, nor could I embrace him in my affections, till I understood how he could be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: how, in a word, he could be the 'righteous Father.' That satisfied my conscience and my heart at the same time, for my conscience said, It is well. God hath not put away sin without a sacrifice, and hath not winked at sin nor waived his justice in order to indulge his mercy, but he remains just as he ever was 'the same thrice holy God who will by no means spare the guilty. He hath laid the punishment of our sins upon Christ; he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And all this he has done that he might act to us as a Father, and save his own children from the result of their transgressions. He has given his only begotten Son to die in our stead that many sons might be brought to glory through him. It is at the cross we understand this riddle. Here we see the righteous Father. But the world will not learn it, and a large part of the professing church, which is nothing better than the world wrongfully named with Christ's name, will not learn it. They do anything they can to get away from atonement: love without righteousness is their idol. Substitution is a word that is hard for the world to spell: they cannot abide it. That Christ should suffer in the stead of the guilty, and bear that we might never bear the Father's righteous wrath, 'this they cannot away with. Many pretend to keep the atonement, and yet they tear the bowels out of it. They profess to believe in the gospel, but it is a gospel without the blood of the atonement; and a bloodless gospel is a lifeless gospel, a dead gospel, and a damning gospel. Let those take heed who cannot see God as a righteous Father, for they are numbered amongst the world who know him not. 'These have known thee,' saith our Lord. These who have been taught by Christ, and these alone, come to find as much joy in the word 'righteous' as in the word 'Father'; and blending the two together they feel an intense love to the 'righteous Father,' and their hearts rejoice in a holy gospel, a message of mercy consistent with justice, a covenant salvation ordered in all things and sure, because it

does no violence to law and does not bind the hands of justice. Beloved, if this revelation of the atoning blood does not make your heart love Jesus, and love the Father, it is because you are not in him; but if you know this secret as to how righteousness and peace have kissed each other, you know the name that wins the affection of believers to God. My own heart is glad and rejoices every hour because I find rest in substitution, safety in the vindication of the law, and bliss in the glory of the divine character.

'Lo! In the grace that rescued man
His brightest form of glory shines!
Here, on the cross, 'tis fairest drawn
In precious blood and crimson lines.
'Here I behold his inmost heart,
Where grace and vengeance strangely join,
Piercing his Son with sharpest smart,
To make the purchased pleasure mine.
'Oh, the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where God the Saviour loved and died!
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From his dear wounds and bleeding sides.'

Still, I would take the word 'name' in a wider sense. 'I have declared unto them thy name,' which signifies 'thy character.' The word 'name' is used as a sort of summary of all the attributes of God. All these attributes are well adapted to win the love of all regenerate spirits. Just think for a minute. God is holy. To a holy mind there is nothing in the world, there is nothing in heaven more beautiful than holiness. We read of the beauties of holiness; for to a soul that is purified, holiness is superlatively lovely. Now, beauty wins love, and consequently when Jesus Christ makes known his holy Father, and shows us in his life and in his death the holiness of the Ever-blessed, then our heart is won to the Father. 'Oh,' say you, 'but holiness does not always win love.' No, not the love of the defiled hearts that cannot appreciate it; but those who are pure in heart, and can see God, no sooner behold his holiness than they are enamoured of it, and their souls at once delight in their Lord.

Moreover, we learn from our Lord Jesus that God is good. 'There is none good but one: that is God.' How inexpressibly good he is! There is no goodness but what comes from God. His name, 'God' is but short for 'good,' and all the good things that we receive in this life, and for the life to come, are but enlargements of his blessed name. 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' Blessings enjoyed by us are streams that flow from the fountain head of God's infinite goodness to the sons of men. A man cannot help loving God when once he knows him to be good, for all men love that which they apprehend to be good to them. A man says, 'Gold is good; rest is good; fame is good;' and therefore he seeks after these things, and when he comes to know that God is good, oh, then his spirit follows hard after him. He cannot help but love that which he is persuaded is in the highest sense good.

The soul that knows the name of the Lord rejoices at the very mention of him.

To sinners like ourselves perhaps the next word may have more sweetness. God is merciful; he is ever ready to forgive. Note how the prophet saith, 'Who is a God like unto thee, passing by transgression?' He does not say, 'Who is a man like unto thee?' for none among our race can for a moment be compared with him; but even if the gods of the heathen were gods, none of them could be likened unto the Lord for mercy. Now, when a man knows that he has offended, and yet the person offended readily and freely forgives, why, it wins his love. If he is a right-hearted man he cries, 'I cannot again offend one who so generously casts all my offences behind his back.' The mercy of God is such a love-winning attribute that, as I told you the other Sunday, twenty-six times in a single psalm the ancient church sang, 'His mercy endureth for ever.' Free grace and pardoning love sensibly known in the soul will win your hearts unto God for ever, so that you shall be his willing servants as long as you have any being.

But then there is a higher word still. God is love, and there is a something about love which always wins love. When love puts on her own golden armour, and bares her sword bright with her own unselfishness, she goeth on conquering and to conquer. Let a man once apprehend that God is love, that this is God's very essence, and he must at once love God. I do not mean merely 'apprehend' that God is love in the cold intellect; but when this heart begins to glow and burn with that divine revelation, then straightway the spirit is joined unto the Lord, and rests with delight in the great Father of spirits. Love knits and binds. Oh to feel more of its uniting power.

Thus have I shown you the manna which love feeds upon, the nectar which it drinks. Everything in God is lovely, and there is no trait in his character that is otherwise than lovely. All the lovelinesses that can be conceived are heaped up in God without the slightest admixture or adulteration. He is love altogether, wholly, and emphatically. Oh, surely our Lord and Master was wise when he fed his people's love upon such meat as this.

II. Brethren, we have as yet only been standing at the furnace mouth: let us now enter into the devouring flame while we speak, in the second place, upon THE LOVE ITSELF.

Observe, first, what this love is not. 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.' Do notice that the prayer is not that the Father's love may be set upon them, or moved towards them. God does not love us because we know him, for he loved us before we knew him, even as Paul speaks of 'His great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.' Jesus has not come to set his Father's love upon the chosen. Oh, no; he did not even die with that object, for the Father's love was upon the chosen from everlasting. 'The Father himself loveth you' was always true. Christ did not die to make his Father loving, but because his Father is loving: the atoning blood is the outflow of the very heart of God toward us. So do not make any mistake. Our Lord speaks not of the divine love in itself, but in us. This is not the eternal love of God towards us of which we are now reading, but that love in us. We are inwardly to feel the love which proceeds from the Father, and so to have it in us. We are to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. It is to be recognized by us, felt in us, made the subject of inward joy; this it is that our Lord wishes to produce, that the love of God may be in us, dwelling in our hearts, a welcome guest, the sovereign of our souls.

And this love is of a very peculiar sort. Do let me read the verse again: 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.' It is God's own love in us. The love of the Father towards Jesus springs up like

a crystal fountain, and then the sparkling drops fall and overflow, as you have seen the fountains do, and we are the cups into which this overflowing love of God towards Christ Jesus flows, and flows till we too are full. The inward love so much desired for us by our Lord is no emotion of nature, no attachment proceeding from the unregenerate will, but it is the Father's love transplanted into the soil of these poor hearts, and becoming our love to Jesus, as we shall have to show in the next point. But is not this a wonderful thing, that God's own love to Jesus should dwell in our hearts? And yet it is so. The love wherewith we love Christ, mark you, is God's love to Christ: 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.' 'All true love, such as the Father delights in and accepts at our hands, is nothing but his own love, which has come streaming down from his own heart into our renewed minds.

But what can this mean? I must ask you to observe that it includes within itself four precious things.

First, the text means that our Lord Jesus Christ desires us to have a distinct recognition of the Father's love to him. He wants the love wherewith the Father loves him to be felt in us, so that we may say, 'Yes, I know the Father loved him, for I, who am such a poor, unworthy, and foolish creature, yet love him; and, oh, how his Father must love him.' I love him! Ay, by his grace, it were a blessed thing to die for him; but if I love him, oh, how must his Father love him who can see all his beauty, and can appreciate every distinct piece of loveliness that is in him! God never loved anything as he loves Christ, except his people, and they have had to be lifted up to that position by the love which the Father has to his Son. For, first and foremost, the Father and the Son are one: they are one in essence. The Saviour has been with the Father from the beginning, and his delight has been with him, even as the Father testified, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Oh, do try to feel, if you can, the love of the Father to his Son, or else you will not love the Father as you should for the amazing sacrifice which he made in giving Jesus to us. Think what it cost him to tear his Well-Beloved from his bosom and send him down below to be 'despised and rejected.' Think what it cost him to nail him up to yonder cross, and then forsake him and hide his face from him, because he had laid all our sins upon him. Oh, the love he must have had to us thus to have made his best Beloved to become a curse for us, as it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.' I want you to get this right into your souls, dear friends. Do not hold it as a dry doctrine, but let it touch your heart. Let it flow into your heart like a boiling stream, till your whole souls become like Icelandic geysers, which boil and bubble up and send their steam aloft into the clouds. Oh, to have the soul filled with the love of the Father towards him who is altogether lovely.

Now, go a step further and deeper. Our text bears a further reading. Remember that you are to have in your heart a sense of the Father's love to you, and to recollect that it is precisely the same love wherewith he loves his Son. 'That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.' Oh, wonder of wonders, I feel more inclined to sit down and meditate upon it than to stand up and talk about it! The love wherewith he loved his Son such is his love to all his chosen ones. Can you believe it, that you should be the object of God's delight, even as Christ is, because you are in Christ; that you should be the object of the Father's love as truly as Christ is, because he sees you to be part and parcel of the mystical body of his well-beloved Son? Do not tell me that God the Father does not love you as well as he does Christ: the point can be settled by the grandest matter of fact that ever was. When there was a choice between Christ and his people which should die of the two, the Father freely delivered up his own Son that we might live through him. Oh, what a meeting there must have been of the seas of love that day, when God's great love to us came rolling in like a glorious springtide, and his love to his Son came rolling in at the same time. If they had met and come into collision, we cannot imagine the result; but when they both took to rolling together in one mighty torrent, what a stream of love was there! The Lord Jesus sank that we might

swim, he sank that we might rise; and now we are borne onward for ever by the mighty sweep of infinite love into an everlasting blessedness which tongues and lips can never fully set forth. Oh, be ravished with this. Be carried away with it; be in ecstasy at love so amazing, so divine: the Father loves you even as he loves his Son; after the same manner and sort he loveth all his redeemed.

But now this goes to a third meaning, and that is that we are to give back a reflection of this love, and to love Jesus as the Father loves him. A dear old friend speaking to me the other day in a rapturous tone said, 'I love Jesus as the Father loves him.' This is true; not equally, but like. Is not this a blessed thought? I said, 'O friend, that is a strong thing to say!' 'Ah,' said he, 'but not stronger than Jesus would have it when he prays that 'the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' His people love Christ as the Father loves him,' in the same way, though from want of capacity they cannot reach to the same immeasurable force of love. Oh, to throw back on Christ his Father's love. The Father is the sun and we are the moon, but the moonlight is the same light as the sunlight. We can see a difference because reflection robs the light of much of its heat and its brilliance, but it is the same light. The moon has not a ray of light but what came from the sun, and we have not a live coal of love to Christ but what came from the Father. We are as the moon, shining by reflected light, but Jesus loves the moonlight of our love and rejoices in it. Let us give him all of it: let us try to be as the full moon always, and let us not dwindle down to a mere ring of love, or a crescent of affection; let us render no half-moon love; let us not be half dark and cold, but let us shine on Christ with all the light we can possibly reflect of his father's love, saying in our very soul,

'My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine;

For thee all the follies of sin I resign.'

And then fourthly, this love of the Father in us is to go beaming forth from us to all around. When we get the love wherewith the Father loves the Son into our hearts, then it is to go out towards all the chosen seed. He that loveth him that begat loveth also them that are begotten of him. Ay, and your love is to go forth to all the sons of men, seeking their good for God's glory, that they may be brought in to know the same Saviour in whom we rejoice. Oh, if the love of the Father to Christ once enters into a man's soul it will change him; it will sway him with the noblest passion; it will make him a zealot for Christ; it will cast out his selfishness; it will change him into the image of Christ, and fit him to dwell in heaven where love is perfected.

So I conclude this second head by saying that this indwelling of the Father's love in us has the most blessed results. It has an expulsive result. As soon as ever it gets into the heart it says to all love of sin, 'Get thee hence; there remains no room for thee here.' When the light enters in, the darkness receives immediate notice of ejection; the night is gone as soon as the dawn appears. It has also a repulsive power by which it repels the assaults of sin. As though a man did snatch the sun out of the heaven and make a round shield with it, and hold it in the very face of the prince of darkness, and blind him with the light, so doth the love of God the Father repel the enemy. It girds the soul with the armour of light. It repels the devil, the love of the world, the love of sin, and all outward temptations. And then what an impulsive power it has. Get the love of Christ into you, and it is as when an engine receives fire and steam, and so obtains the force which drives it. Then have you strengthening, then have you motive power, then are you urged on to this and that heroic deed which, apart from this sublime love, you never would have thought of. For Christ you can live, for Christ you can suffer, for Christ you can die, when once the Father's love to him has taken full possession of your spirit. And, oh, how elevating it is. How it lifts a man up above self

and sin; how it makes him seek the things that are above! How purifying it is; and how happy it makes the subject of its influence. If you are unhappy you want more of the love of God. 'Oh,' say you, 'I want a larger income.' Nonsense. A man is not made happy by money. You will do very well in poverty if you have enough of the love of God. Oh, but if your soul be filled with the love of God, your spirit will be ready to dance at the very sound of his name. You murmur and repine at providence because the fire of your love is burning low. Come, get the ashes together; pray the Spirit of God to blow upon them: beg him to bring fresh fuel of holy knowledge, till your soul becomes like Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, heated seven times hotter. This is the kind of love we should have towards Christ. No blessing can excel it. Oh, Saviour, let thy prayer be fulfilled in me and in all thy dear people this morning, and may the love wherewith the Father hath loved thee be in us.

III. Thirdly, here is THE COMPANION OF LOVE. 'I in them.' Look the text a minute and just catch those two words. Here is 'love' and 'I' love and Christ come together. Oh, blessed guests! 'Love and I,' says Christ; as if he felt he never had a companion that suited him better. 'Love' and 'I': Jesus is ever at home where love is reigning. When love lives in his people's hearts, Jesus lives there too. Does Jesus, then, live in the hearts of his people? Yes; wherever there is the love of the Father shed abroad in them, he must be there. We have his own word for it, and we are sure that Jesus knows where he is.

We are sure that he is where love is; for, first, where there is love there is life, and where there is life there is Christ, for he himself says, 'I am the life.' There is no true life in the believer's soul that is divided from Christ. We are sure of that; so that where there is love there is life, and where there is life there is Christ. Again, where there is the love of God in the heart there is the Holy Spirit; but wherever the Holy Spirit is, there is Christ, for the Holy Spirit is Christ's representative; and it is in that sense that he tells us, 'Lo, I am with you always,' namely, because the Spirit is come to be always with us. So where there is love there is the Spirit of God, and where there is the Spirit of God there is Christ. So it is always 'Love and I.'

Furthermore where there is love there is faith, for faith worketh by love, and there never was true love to Christ apart from faith; but where there is faith there is always Christ, for if there is faith in him he has been received into the soul. Jesus is ever near to that faith which has himself for its foundation and resting place. Where there is love there is faith, where there is faith there is Christ, and so it is 'love and I.'

Ay, but where there is the Father's love toward Christ in the heart God himself is there. I am sure of that, for God is love. So if there is love within us there must be God, and where God is, there Christ is, for he saith, 'I and my Father are one.' So you see, where there is love, there must be Jesus Christ, for these reasons and for many others beside.

'I in them.' Yes, if I were commanded to preach for seven years from these three words only, I should never exhaust the text, I am quite certain. I might exhaust you by my dulness, and exhaust myself by labour to tell out the sacred secret, but I should never exhaust the text. 'I in them.' It is the most blessed word I know of. You, beloved, need not go abroad to find the Lord Jesus Christ. Where does he live? He lives within you. 'I in them.' As soon as ever you pray you are sure he hears you, because he is within you. He is not knocking at your door: he has entered into you, and there he dwells, and will go no more out for ever.

What a blessed sense of power this gives to us. 'I in them.' Then it is no more 'I' in weakness, but, since Jesus dwells in me, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.' 'I in them.' It is the glory of the believer that Christ dwells in him. 'Unto you that believe he is precious.'

Hence we gather the security of the believer. Brother, if Christ be in me, and I am overcome, Christ is conquered too, for he is in me. 'I in them.' I cannot comprehend the doctrine of believers falling from grace. If Christ has once entered into them, will he not abide with them? Paul saith, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' To that persuasion I set my hand and seal. Well, then, if Christ is in us, whatever happens to us will happen to him. We shall be losers if we do not get to heaven; but so will he be, for he is in us, and so is a partaker of our condition. If it is an indissoluble union and so he declares it is 'I in them,' then his destiny and ours are linked together; and if he wins the victory we conquer in him: if he sits at the right hand of God we shall sit at the right hand of God with him, for he is in us.

I know not what more to say, not because I have nothing more, but because I do not know which to bring forward out of a thousand precious things; but I leave the subject with you. Go home, and live in the power of this blessed text. Go home, and be as happy as you can be to live, and if you get a little happier that will not hurt you, for then you will be in heaven. Keep up unbroken joy in the Lord. It is not 'I in them' for Sundays, and away on Mondays; 'I in them' when they sit in the Tabernacle, and out of them when they reach home. No; 'I in them,' and that for ever and for ever. Go and rejoice. Show this blind world that you have a happiness which as much outshines theirs as the sun outshines the sparks which fly from the chimney and expire. Go forth with joy and be led forth with peace; let the mountains and the hills break forth before you into singing.

'All that remains for me

Is but to love and sing,

And wait until the angels come,

To bear me to the King.'

'Oh, but I have my troubles.' I know you have your troubles, but they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you, nor even with your present glory. I feel as if I could not think about troubles, nor sins, nor anything else when I once behold the love of God to me. When I feel my love to Christ, which is but God's love to Christ, burning within my soul, then I glory in tribulation, for the power of God shall be through these afflictions made manifest in me. 'I in them.' God bless you with the knowledge of this mystery, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON'John 17.

HYMNS FROM 'OUR OWN HYMN BOOK'917, 797, 766.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/love-and-i-a-mystery/>

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