

EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS.

FOR FAMILY AND PRIVATE USE.

WITH THE TEXT COMPLETE,
And many Explanatory Notes.

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JOHN XXI. 15–17.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, <i>son</i> of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.	sheep.
16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, <i>son</i> of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my	17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, <i>son</i> 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.

THESE verses describe a remarkable conversation between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Peter. To the careful Bible reader, who remembers the Apostle's thrice-repeated denial of Christ, the passage cannot fail to be a deeply interesting portion of Scripture. Well would it be for the Church, if all "after-dinner" conversations among Christians were as useful and edifying as this.

We should notice first, in these verses, *Christ's question to Peter*: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"—Three times we find the same inquiry made. It seems most probable that this three-fold repetition was meant to remind the Apostle of his own thrice-repeated denial. Once we find a remarkable addition to the inquiry: "Lovest thou Me more than these?" It is a reasonable supposition that those three words "more than these," were meant to remind Peter of his overconfident assertion: "Though all men deny Thee, yet will not I."—It is just as if our Lord would say, "Wilt thou now exalt thyself above others? Hast thou yet learned thine own weakness?"

"Lovest thou Me" may seem at first sight a simple question. In one sense it is so. Even a child can understand love, and can say whether he loves another or not. Yet "Lovest thou Me" is, in reality, a very searching question. We may know much, and do much, and profess much, and talk much, and work much, and give much, and go through much, and make much show in our religion, and yet be dead before God, from want of love, and at last go down to the pit. Do we love Christ? That is the great question. Without this there is no vitality about our Christianity. We are no better than painted wax figures, lifeless stuffed beasts in a museum, sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. There is no life where there is no love.

Let us take heed that there is some feeling in our religion. Knowledge, orthodoxy, correct views, regular use of forms, a respectable moral life,—all these do not make up a true Christian. There must be some personal feeling towards Christ. Feeling alone, no doubt, is a poor useless thing, and may be here today and gone tomorrow. But the entire absence of feeling is a very bad symptom, and speaks ill for the state of a man's soul. The men and women to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistles had feelings, and were not ashamed of them. There was One in heaven whom they loved, and that One

was Jesus the Son of God. Let us strive to be like them, and to have some real feeling in our Christianity, if we hope to share their reward.

We should notice, secondly, in these verses, *Peter's answer to Christ's question*. Three times we find the Apostle saying, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." Once we are told that he said, "Thou knowest all things." Once we have the touching remark made, that he was "grieved to be asked the third time." We need not doubt that our Lord, like a skilful physician, stirred up this grief intentionally. He intended to prick the Apostle's conscience, and to teach him a solemn lesson. If it was grievous to the disciple to be questioned, how much more grievous must it have been to the Master to be denied!

The answer that the humbled Apostle gave, is the one account that the true servant of Christ in every age can give of his religion. Such an one may be weak, and fearful, and ignorant, and unstable, and failing in many things, but at any rate he is real and sincere. Ask him whether he is converted, whether he is a believer, whether he has grace, whether he is justified, whether he is sanctified, whether he is elect, whether he is a child of God,—ask him any one of these questions and he may perhaps reply that he really does not know!—But ask him whether he loves Christ, and he will reply, "I do." He may add that he does not love Him as much as he ought to do; but he will not say that he does not love Him at all. The rule will be found true with very few exceptions. Wherever there is true grace, there will be a consciousness of love towards Christ.

What, after all, is the great secret of loving Christ? It is an inward sense of having received from Him pardon and forgiveness of sins. Those love much who feel much forgiven. He that has come to Christ with his sins, and tasted the blessedness of free and full absolution, he is the man whose heart will be full of love towards his Saviour. The more we realize that Christ has suffered for us, and paid our debt to God, and that we are washed and justified through His blood, the more we shall love Him for having loved us, and given Himself for us. Our knowledge of doctrines may be defective. Our ability to defend our views in argument may be small. But we cannot be prevented feeling. And our feeling will be like that of the Apostle Peter: "Thou, Lord, who knowest all things, Thou knowest my heart; and Thou knowest that I love Thee."

We should notice, lastly, in these verses, *Christ's command to Peter*. Three times we find Him saying, "Feed" my flock: once, "Feed my lambs;" and twice my "sheep." Can we doubt for a moment that this thrice-repeated charge was full of deep meaning? It was meant to commission Peter once more to do the work of an Apostle, notwithstanding his recent fall. But this was only a small part of the meaning. It was meant to teach Peter and the whole Church the mighty lesson, that usefulness to others is the grand test

of love, and working for Christ the great proof of really loving Christ. It is not loud talk and high profession; it is not even impetuous, spasmodic zeal, and readiness to draw the sword and fight,—it is steady, patient, laborious effort to do good to Christ’s sheep scattered throughout this sinful world, which is the best evidence of being a true-hearted disciple. This is the real secret of Christian greatness. It is written in another place, “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” (Matt. xx. 26-28.)

Forever let the parting charge of our blessed Master abide in our consciences, and come up in the practice of our daily lives. It is not for nothing we may be sure, that we find these things recorded for our learning, just before He left the world. Let us aim at a loving, doing, useful, hard-working, unselfish, kind, unpretentious religion. Let it be our daily desire to think of others, care for others, do good to others, and to lessen the sorrow, and increase the joy of this sinful world. This is to realize the great principle which our Lord’s command to Peter was intended to teach. So living, and so labouring to order our ways, we shall find it abundantly true, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts ix. 35.)

NOTES. JOHN XXI. 15-17.

15.—[*So when they had dined.*] In the verses we now begin, we pass away from the region of allegory, parable, symbol, miracle, and vision, to a plain, unmistakable conversation between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Peter. It is a conversation of a deeply interesting character, of which every letter deserves to be written in gold. He that supposes that any “John,” except John the Apostle, could have written these three verses, gives little evidence of possessing a sound judgment.

It is noteworthy that our Lord does not begin His conversation till the social meal was over. Trifling as this circumstance may seem, it deserves attention, and conveys a lesson. Nothing was so likely to set the Apostles at ease with their Master and to prepare them to receive any word that fell from His lips with love and affection, as to deal familiarly and intimately with them, and let them “eat and drink” in His company.

[*Jesus saith to Simon Peter.*] The object of our Lord in addressing Simon Peter in these verses should be carefully remembered, and not misunderstood. That there was a distinct object in singling him out from the seven disciples sitting round our Lord, and specially speaking to him, I cannot doubt, But what was that object? This question can only be answered by considering the peculiar character of St. Peter, and the peculiar circumstances of his history during the last day of our Lord’s ministry, before the crucifixion. None had made so high a profession. None had spoken so confidently of his own strength. None had shown such instability in the hour of trial. None had fallen so sadly, by denying his Master three times. Remembering all this, I believe that our Lord had a special object in addressing Peter on this occasion; and I see a special wisdom in the address and conversation being recorded as taking place before six witnesses.

(a) I believe our Lord’s first object was to remind Peter of his sad fall, through overconfidence, and want of watchfulness and prayer. He would have him know that, though

raised, pardoned and forgiven, he must never forget what had happened. Three times he had denied his Master. Three times he must be publicly asked whether he loved his Master, Hengstenberg maintains that Peter's fall was not at all in our Lord's mind in this remarkable conversation. But I cannot agree with him.

(b) I believe our Lord's second object was, as Cyril remarks, to restore Peter to his former position as a trusted Apostle and minister in the presence of six witnesses. The thought might possibly come across the minds of some Christians, in future days, that Peter forfeited his claim to be an Apostle and leader of the Church, by his thrice repeated denial of his Master. Our Lord in mercy guards against this possibility, by publicly commissioning Peter once more to do the work of a pastor in the Church.

(c) I believe our Lord's third object was to teach Peter what should be the primary aim of an Apostle and minister. The true qualification for the ministerial office, he must learn, was not high profession of more courage and zeal than others, not loud talk, or even readiness to fight; but loving, patient usefulness to the souls of others, and diligent care for the sheep of Christ's flock.

Calvin remarks, "The Evangelist now relates in what manner Peter was restored to that rank of honour from which he had fallen. The treacherous denial, which has been formerly described, had undoubtedly rendered him unworthy of the apostleship; for how could he be capable of instructing others in the faith, who had basely revolted from it? He had been made an Apostle, but it was along with Judas; and from the time that he acted the part of a coward and traitor, he had been deprived of the honour of apostleship. Now therefore the liberty, as well as the authority of teaching is restored to him, both of which he had lost through his own fault. And that the disgrace of his apostasy might not stand in the way, Christ blots out and destroys the remembrance of it. Such a restoration was necessary, both for Peter and his hearers: for Peter, that he might the more boldly execute his office, being assured of the calling with which Christ had again invested him; for his hearers, that the stain which attached to his person might not be the occasion of despising the Gospel. To us also, in the present day, it is of very great importance that Peter comes forth to us as a new man, from whom the disgrace that might have lessened his authority, is removed."

The Roman Catholic theory, that our Lord specially addressed Peter, on this occasion, in order to mark him out as head of the Church, is one which I repudiate as preposterous, unreasonable, improbable, and utterly destitute of solid foundation. Neither here, nor elsewhere, is there a tittle of evidence to show that any primacy was ever intended to be given to Peter. On the contrary, the fact that our Lord specially appeared on one occasion to James alone, and that afterwards James was the presiding Apostle in the first Council at Jerusalem, would seem to indicate that, if He conferred primacy on any Apostle, He conferred it on James. But there is no proof that primacy was conferred on any one at all.

Burton says. "The profane and ridiculous pretensions of the Church of Rome are based in great part on the words of our Saviour addressed to St. Peter in this passage. The Papists assume (1) that He hereby appointed St. Peter to be His vicar upon earth; (2) that St. Peter was the first Bishop of Rome; (3) that St. Peter transmitted to the Bishops of the same See, in endless succession, his own supposed authority over the rest of Christendom. Each one of these assumptions is simply unfounded and untrue; opposed alike to Scripture and to reason; to the records of the Early Church and the opinions of the primitive Fathers. With such fictions, nevertheless, do Romish writers distort the true image of Christianity; disfiguring their commentaries therewith, and betraying with a reckless eagerness to obtrude their ambitious and unscriptural theory on all occasions, their secret misgivings as to its real value."

[*Simon, son of Jonas.*] This mode of address, thrice repeated in this remarkable conver-

sation, is only used by our Lord on this occasion, and when Peter first came to Him. (John i. 42.) I do not find that any Commentator gives a satisfactory explanation of it, and we are left to conjecture the reason. (*a*) Some think that our Lord purposely avoided the name Peter, in order to remind the Apostle how on a recent occasion he had shown himself not firm as a “rock,” agreeably to his name, but weak as a reed. (*b*) Some think that our Lord meant to remind the Apostle of the memorable day when he first began to be a disciple, when Jesus said to him, “Thou art Simon, the son of Jona.” (*c*) Some think that our Lord would remind the Apostle of the day when he said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona,” after the good confession which Peter had made. (Matt. xvi.17.) (*d*) Some think that our Lord intended to remind Peter of the lowly origin from which he sprung, as son of one who, like Zebedee, in all probability, was only an humble fisherman. (*e*) Some think that the expression was only used to distinguish Simon Peter from the other Simon, who may *possibly* have been in company, as one of the two unnamed disciples. (Ch. xxi. 2.) My own impression is, if I must give an opinion, that our Lord intended to carry Peter’s mind back to the day when he first began to be a disciple of Christ, and to all the three years that had elapsed. It is as though He said, “Simon, son of Jonas, thou rememberest the day when thou didst first come to Me, and believe on Me as the Lamb of God. (John i. 35-42.) Thou knowest all that thou hast been, and all that thou hast gone through since that day. Once more I address thee by the same name with which I began. Before sending thee forth, and commissioning thee once more, in the presence of these six brethren, as a restored and trusted disciple, I ask thee, Dost thou love Me? “I throw out the thought as a conjecture. I see more in it than in any other view.

[*Lovest thou Me?*] The question which Jesus asked of Peter was very simple, but very searching. It was simple, because it appealed to his feelings. Even a child knows what he feels, and whom he loves. If our Lord had asked,—“Dost thou believe? Art thou converted? Art thou. elect? Hast thou faith? Hast thou grace? Art thou born again? Hast thou the Spirit? Art thou sanctified? Art thou justified?”—any one of these questions would have been perhaps very difficult to answer. But Peter could surely tell what he felt towards Christ.—At the same time the question was very searching. It is as though our Lord said, “Simon, I know all thy history. I know what thou hast done, and what thou hast been, about the time of my betrayal and crucifixion, and I am ready to look over all, and pardon all. But one thing I must have in my disciples, and that is, a sincere and loving heart. I can look over want of knowledge and want of faith; but I must have love. Now, before these six brethren, before commissioning thee once more as an accredited and trustworthy Apostle, I ask thee solemnly, Dost thou love Me?”

Cyril thinks that Peter had received such special mercy, pardon, and forgiveness, that he might be reasonably required to feel special love.

[*More than these.*] This remarkable expression, which is only used in this verse, admits of three interpretations. (*a*) It may mean, Dost thou love Me more than thou lovest these thy brethren and friends around thee, and art thou willing to give them up for my sake, and follow Me alone, if need be? (*b*) It may mean, as Whitby says, Dost thou love Me more than these boats and fishing nets, among which thou hast spent so much of thy life, from which I did first call thee, and in the midst of which I find thee today? Art thou willing for my sake to give them all up, and devote thyself to preaching the Gospel? (*c*) It may mean, as the great majority of commentators think, Dost thou love Me more than thy brethren love Me? Thou rememberest a certain day when thou didst confidently say, “Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I.” Thou wast confident then, that thou wast more faithful than others. Will thou say that now? After all that has happened, art thou sure that thy heart is better than that of others?”—I decidedly prefer this last view to either of the others. I think it was meant to teach Peter, that the two grand qualifications for a faithful pastor were love and

humility.

Musculus observes, that Jesus did not ask Peter this thrice-repeated question, as if He was ignorant and desired to learn, but in order to remind him before others of his future duty.

Bullinger suggests, that one reason among others why Jesus said, “more than these?” was Peter’s forwardness to spring into the water, and come to shore, before the other six Apostles, who were in the boat with him.

Rollock observes, on our Lord’s merciful and loving dealing with Peter, “Rebukers should be lovers. If thou rebuke a man, love him; otherwise speak not to him, but close thy mouth. If thou season not thy rebukes with ‘love,’ then that which should have been as medicine will be turned into poison, They that would be instructors and admonishers should be lovers. Wherefore, whatever thou doest, do it in lenity and meekness. A bitter teacher is not worth a penny. This is what St. Paul requires when he says, ‘The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men.’ (2 Tim. ii. 24.) All should be in gentleness: teaching in gentleness. Wherefore? Because, if gentleness be lacking, there will be no edification, no comforting, no instruction.”

[*He saith... Yea, Lord...knowest...I love Thee.*] The answer of Simon Peter in this verse is a beautiful example of sincerity and humility. He appeals to our Lord’s knowledge of his heart: “I may be very defective in knowledge, faith, courage, wisdom. I am a debtor to mercy and grace above many. Yet, Lord, thou knowest that, with all my faults and infirmities, I do love Thee.” He does not venture to say a word about others. He does not pretend to compare his love with that of his brethren. If he has done so in time past he will do so no more. —“I know not whether others love Thee more or less than I do. I only know my own heart; and I feel sure that I love Thee.”

Let us carefully note that love to Christ is one of the simplest tests of a true Christian. He may not feel sure that he is converted, or that he repents or believes aright. But if he is real, he will be able to say that he loves Christ.

[*He saith...Feed my lambs.*] Having received from Peter a public profession of his sincere love, our Lord proceeds to tell him how that love is to be shown, and to give him his commission for the future. He bids him prove the reality of his love by “feeding His lambs.”—When our Lord said “feed,” I believe He meant that Peter was to feed souls with the precious food of God’s Word, to supply them with that bread of life which a man must eat or die, and to watch carefully and diligently over their spiritual interests, like a good shepherd watching his flock. When our Lord spoke of “lambs,” I believe He meant the least, the weakest, and feeblest members of that flock which is His Church. It is as though Jesus said,—“Simon, if indeed thou doth love Me, know that the best proof of love is to devote thyself to the great work of shepherding souls. Live for others. Care for others. Minister to others. Do good to others. Seek out and search for my sheep in this wicked world, and think it not beneath thee to attend to the wants of the feeblest among them. Herein, remember, is true love. It does not consist in talking, professing, fighting, or seeking pre-eminence over others. It is best seen in walking in my steps. I came to seek and save that which was lost. I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Go and do likewise. He loves most who is most like Me.”

I cannot think that “lambs” in this place was intended to apply to young children, as it is often interpreted. All such interpretations I regard as nothing better than pious accommodations. I believe that “lambs,” in contradistinction to “sheep,” mean those who are young and weak in spiritual experience. Peter was not to neglect and despise them because weak. Peter remembered these ringing words, we may be sure, when he wrote in his Epistle, “Feed the flock of God that is among you.” (1 Peter v. 2.)

Augustine observes that Christ, both here and in the two following verses, says, "MY" and not "THY." The Church is His property, and not the property of ministers.

Bullinger observes that Christ passes from the calling of the fisherman to that of the shepherd, as representing, more than any other callings, the ministerial office.

- 16.—[*He saith to him again, etc.*] This verse is simply a repetition of the preceding one, with three exceptions.—For one thing, the expression, "more than these," is omitted.—For another thing, the word which we render "feed," in the Greek is a wider, fuller word than the one employed in the preceding verse.—For another thing, our Lord speaks of His "sheep" instead of His "lambs." By "sheep" I believe our Lord meant those members of His flock who were of more advanced experience and strength in grace, than the class He had spoken of in the preceding verse. Both classes demanded the attention of a faithful pastor.

The repetition of the inquiry was doubtless intended to rouse Peter's attention, and to impress the whole subject on his mind.

Lightfoot thinks that the "threefold repetition,—feed, feed, feed, may most fitly apply to the threefold object of St. Peter's ministry: viz., the Gentiles, the Jews, and the dispersed ten tribes." But this seems to me fanciful. Bengel thinks it refers to the three periods of Peter's ministry.

Whitby observes, "Those who argue for Peter's supremacy above other Apostles, from this passage, are vain in their imagination. If by these words Christ required Peter to feed all His sheep and lambs, it is certain he was wanting in his duty. He never exercised an act of supremacy over the rest of the Apostles; but being sent by them, obeyed (Acts viii. 14), and being reproved by St. Paul, held his peace (Gal. ii. 11-16), and was so far from feeding all Christ's sheep, that he never fed any of the province of St. Paul."

- 17.—[*He saith unto him the third time, etc.*] This verse again is a repetition of the two preceding verses, but contains two points of difference. For one thing we are told that "Peter was grieved," on being asked the same question three times. For another thing, Peter uses stronger language when he appeals to our Lord's knowledge of his heart. "Lord," he says "Thou knowest all things."

I cannot for a moment doubt that our Lord asked Peter this remarkable question three times, in order to remind him that he had denied Him thrice. Our sins ought never to be forgotten by us, though they are wiped out of the book of God's remembrance. The very "grief" which Peter felt at being thrice asked about his love, was intended to do him good. It was meant to remind him that if he was grieved to be asked thrice, "Lovest thou Me?" how much more must his Master have been grieved when he thrice denied Him!

Whitby observes, "Here is an argument that Christ, in Peter's judgment, was truly God. He says, 'Thou knowest all things.' It is to God alone that the secrets of all hearts lie open."

There are little nice distinctions in the original Greek of these three verses, in the words that are used, which the English language cannot convey. But they deserve notice, and are not without meaning. Two different words are used to express our one word "love." One of these two words means a higher, calmer, nobler kind of love than the other. This is the word which our Lord uses in the fifteenth and sixteenth verses, where He asks the question, "Lovest thou Me?"—The other of the two words means a more passionate and lower kind of love. This is the word which Peter always uses when he says, "I love thee!" and our Lord once uses it in the seventeenth verse.—Again: two different words are employed to express our one English word "feed." One means simply "provide food and pasture," and is used in the fifteenth and seventeenth verses. The other means not only "provide food," but "govern, lead, direct, and generally do the work of a shepherd."

Some of the Roman Catholic writers try to make out that "lambs" in this remarkable

passage mean the laity, and “sheep” the clergy; and that supremacy over clergy and laity alike is intended, by these words, to be conferred on Peter and his successors at Rome! Archbishop Trench (on Miracles) justly condemns this interpretation, as “groundless and trifling.” He observes, “The commission should at least have run, ‘Feed my sheep and feed my shepherds,’ if any such conclusion could be drawn from Christ’s words, though an infinite deal would still remain to be proved.”

The lessons which the whole passage is meant to teach the Church of Christ, are many and deep, and have been far too much neglected in every age. I can only indicate them, and then leave the reader to work them out in his own mind.

(a) Love to Christ’s person is one of the most important graces that can adorn a Christian, and specially a minister. Without it, correct doctrinal views, zeal for proselytizing, knowledge, eloquence, liberality, diligence in visiting the sick and relieving the poor, are worth very little, and will do very little good. With it, God is pleased to look over many infirmities. A minister may be somewhat defective in some of his views, and even in some of his proceedings, but if he loves Christ and has a warm heart, God will seldom allow him to lack a blessing.

Hengstenberg shrewdly remarks, that Christ’s emphatical question about love to Himself, and omission of any question about *love to God*, is strong indirect proof of Christ’s divinity.

(b) True love to Christ is chiefly to be seen in usefulness to others, in doing as Christ did, in walking in His steps, in labouring to do good in this bad world. He that talks of loving Christ, and idles on through life, never trying to do good to others, is deceiving himself, and will find at length that he had better never have been born.

(c) A vast amount of so-called Christianity is perfectly useless in the sight of God, and will only add to people’s condemnation. Church-goers and chapel-goers, who are content to attend services and hear sermons, but know nothing of fervent love to Christ’s person, and never lay themselves out to imitate Him, are in the broad way that leads to destruction.

Rollock observes, “A profane man or woman will say, ‘I love God;’ but if it manifest not itself in an action, thou art but a liar, and lovest Him not. Faith and love must ever utter themselves in good actions. Hast thou gotten a heart, hands, and feet? Do some good. Otherwise, if thou doest never a good deed, thy profession of faith and love is vain.”

He also says,—“The pastor is not worth a penny who strives not to get a sense of the love of Christ into his heart. There are so many difficulties and impediments cast before a pastor, when he is about to discharge his duty, that he never can be able to overcome them, except he both love the Lord, and be sensible of the Lord’s love to him. If the Apostles and martyrs had not loved Jesus exceedingly, they would soon have fainted.”

Leighton observes, “Love is the great endowment of a true pastor of Christ’s flock. He says not to Peter, ‘Art thou wise? or learned? or eloquent?’ but Lovest thou Me? Then, ‘feed.’ Love to Christ begets love to His people’s souls, which are so precious to Him, and a care of feeding them.”

Scott observes, “Those who have been greatly tempted, and have had much humbling experience of their own sinfulness, and have had much forgiven them, generally prove the most tender, compassionate, and attentive pastors, of weak, bruised, and trembling believers.”

(d) The true test of reality in our religion is to be able to appeal confidently to God’s knowledge of our hearts. It matters nothing what friends, and relatives, and fellow-worshippers, may think and say of us. They may praise us, when we do not deserve it, or condemn us, when we are innocent. It matters nothing. If we have the witness of our own hearts, that

we can appeal to Jesus, the Searcher of hearts, and say, “Thou, who knowest all things, knowest that I love Thee,” we need not be afraid.

(e) If we really and truly feel love to Christ, we may thank God and take courage. Of our own faith, and grace, and conversion, and sanctification, we are poor judges. But do we really and sincerely feel that we love Christ? That is the great question. The very existence of such love is a good sign. We should not love Christ, if we had not got something from Him.

Brentius remarks that Peter’s charge to the elders, in his epistle, clearly shows that our Lord’s thrice-repeated charge, “Feed,” was not meant for him only, as the Romanists say, but for all ministers of the Church of Christ, without exception. “The elders which are among you, I exhort:—Feed the flock of God.” (1 Peter v. 1.)