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*FAUST IN THE VOLKSBUCH, AND MARLOWE'S
AND GOETHE'S DRAMAS.*

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A Graduating Thesis; Course L., German Language and Literature.

It cannot be the object of this brief sketch, based upon prominent German critics, to contribute anything new to the Faust-literature. It also lies beyond the present design to investigate the numerous Faust-dramas, and we shall confine ourselves to the Volksbuch and the productions of Marlowe and Goethe.

The 14th and 15th centuries stand out prominent on the page of history, as periods in which the human intellect aroused itself from the long sleep of the dark ages and made an effort to regain its birthright. With new vigor the mind makes researches in all directions. Humanity is guided by new aspirations, whose influences are felt in the church, in the state and in art. New thoughts, new views of life, new principles are advocated. In philosophy a restless spirit manifests itself and the fetters of the scholastic school, whose partisans

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TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

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EPH. iii:17-19—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

How deeply earnest and affectionate was the spirit of Paul! He often threw the instructions and encouragements he designed to give into the form of prayer. In this form they breathed both his spirit of tender love and the great truths and promises of God. In this passage he would exhort the Christians of Ephesus and of the world, to seek after a higher acquaintance with that most delightful and profitable of all themes, the love of Christ. And this he would do that they might be led to strive after perfection of Christian character, looking to God who "Is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." And for this end he prays, "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

But is it not a paradox to speak of knowing that which passeth knowledge? Paul delighted in such seeming contradictions. "When I am weak then am I strong," he said. He classed himself among the saints, and yet he said of sinners, "I am chief." Here he exclaims "to know the love of Christ

which passeth knowledge." The contradiction, however, lies upon the surface. The harmony is profound. The subject is of deepest interest to sinners. It is the very centre and soul of the Gospel: The love of Christ. That we may gain the end Paul had in view in writing this passage, let us study the love of Christ.

First, it "passeth knowledge." Second, it may be known. Third, how it may be known. Fourth, what will result from this knowledge.

First, The love of Christ for perishing men "passeth knowledge." It is a deep where all our thoughts are drowned. No mind of man or angel can measure it. He who exercises it is infinite. It is infinite as his own nature. None but an infinite mind can know it. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou know the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? It is deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." Until we can know immensity of space or eternity of duration we shall not know all of the love of Christ. It "passeth knowledge":—

1st. In the eternity of its origin. It did not spring up in his heart after we had come into being and exhibited traits of character adapted to call it forth. He testifies himself: "I loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn thee"; I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." The eternal Word then looking upon us as an apostate race and exposed in our guilt to eternal despair, fixed His love upon us. Then "he rejoiced in the habitable part of the earth and His delights were with the children of men." Then He entered into covenant with the Father to "make his soul an offering for sin." And then "before the foundation of the world God chose us in Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Here is a mystery profound as the relations between the glorious persons of the Deity. How wonderful that before we had a being, before the world was created or the stars began to shine, when yet the need of that love was almost an infinite distance in the future, "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it."

And 2d. The love of Christ passeth knowledge in its

sovereign discrimination. It is a wonder that Christ should love fallen, guilty, depraved creatures at all. But it is yet more a mystery that he should love some where all were alike guilty. And yet we know he did. There were angels, created long before man, of a higher order; spiritual beings far more like the Creator, shining among seraphim, with grander powers to glorify Him. Many of these "kept not their first estate," but "fell from their own habitation." Sin was their ruin. They were helplessly, hopelessly lost. They needed redemption just as much as man. Will not the Son of God love these nobler sinners rather than men—creatures allied to the brutes that perish? No, "He reserved them in chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day." "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He came:—

"To suffer in the traitor's place
To die for man—surprising grace!
Yet pass rebellious angels by—
O! why for man, dear Saviour, why?"

But it is a blessed truth that the nature which Jesus assumed was human; and that the blood He shed was the blood of the Son of God and therefore of infinite merit. This justifies the offer of salvation to "every creature," the "preaching of the Gospel to all nations," and warrants every soul who hears that good news to accept salvation. Thus far "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son."

But in the actual history of his grace how he distinguishes among the nations. While many are left in the darkness of heathenism, to others he gives the light of the Gospel. And this greater light leads millions to actual salvation. Why is all this? It "passeth knowledge." His own reason is the only one that we can assign. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Yet where the Gospel is freely and fully proclaimed "many are called but few chosen." Some feel the power and sweetness of that love, while others turn contemptuously away from it. Are the former by nature, or practice, better than the latter? In no wise. They feel that they are altogether undeserving and ill-deserving. The Scriptures refer this difference wholly to the love of Christ. "Herein is love; not that

we loved Him, but that He loved us." They feel that the love that applied the salvation of Christ to them, washed them in His blood, renewed them by His Spirit, introduced them to God's favor and gave them a title to glory, is not less tender and boundless than that which bought them. They admire it. They wonder at it. They rejoice in it. They stand amazed saying:—

"Why was I made to hear thy voice
And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice
And rather starve than come?"

And they can but answer,

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly forced us in,
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin,"

And joyfully they sing:

"Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God."

"By the grace of God, I am what I am." Most precious is this love of Christ for individual souls, but most mysterious. Why did he love man rather than fallen angels; why one nation rather than another; why one man rather than another? Who can tell? Surely this love "passeth knowledge."

But passing by the wonderful manner in which His death manifests this love we add:—

3d. It passeth knowledge in the benefits it bestows. These are all comprised in *salvation*. This is a grand, a glorious thing. We know it and we do not. We feel it and yet hope for it. We experience it and yet wait for it until Jesus shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. Some of its blessings are ours in all their fullness now; but such is our state that we cannot *enjoy* them fully. Some of them we have as a drop that gives a taste of what fills our cup. The peace, the sense of pardon, the joyful hope, these are a little in advance of that heaven which awaits us. But this little is worth more than sceptres or thrones, or the world beside. The communion of saints, the fellowship of the triune God, the luxury of co-working with Him in His grandest labor of love, what bliss these bring! If this glimpse of glory enraptures, what will full vision be? If this taste of salvation is worth more than all the world, then what will its fullness be? Until we

shall know eternal peace, eternal purity, eternal glory, eternal fellowship with the good and with God, we shall not know the love of Christ. It "passeth all understanding." In its origin, its discriminations, the cost of its manifestation and the boundless and eternal blessings it brings, it "passeth knowledge." It is mysterious, infinite!

But, Second. It may be known. It cannot be known and unknowable in the same sense, yet Paul prays that we may know it and declares it "passeth knowledge." He prays that we may be "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ." There may be a difference between comprehending and knowing. The former is more a matter of the head, the latter more a matter of the heart. The existence and nature of Christ's love we can comprehend. But the measure of it one cannot reach. We know that the world floats in immensity of space; and we know that space is; but its immensity we can not understand. We comprehend the existence and eternity of God, but we cannot grasp eternity in our thought. We know that the globe is made of particles less by far in number than infinite and yet we can comprehend but a very little portion of them. All we can comprehend of the love of Christ is that its height is higher than heaven, its depth deeper than hell, its length longer than the earth, its breadth broader than the sea; that it is infinite. The imagination may search for its shore until it drops exhausted and cries, "infinite, infinite!" The saints in glory and the angels that "desire to look into these things," join with equal emphasis in crying, "infinite, infinite." And, O! it is blessed to feel the deep conviction that the love of Christ is boundless—infinite as the nature in which it dwells.

But to know the love of Christ is not only to comprehend that it is infinite, but especially to experience its warmth and sweetness and power in the heart. So Paul says elsewhere:—"That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death?" We cannot know it in all its measure, but we can know from having it shed abroad in our hearts how excellent, how wonderful, how free, how manifold, how constant and how long-suffering it is. We can know it in its power to melt

the heart into penitential sorrow and deep gratitude, to comfort it amid all its woes, to cause its tenderest, strongest love to flow forth to Him and sweetly to bind in the way of His commands. We know what the warmth of the sun is, though we cannot tell how much heat is in it. We know what the light is, though we cannot comprehend how great or widely diffused it is. And this heart-knowledge of the love of Christ is the highest and most satisfying and sanctifying of all knowledge. It is thus "seeing him, as in a glass, that we are transformed into the same image." This is the happiest experience of earth. And the experience of heaven will be far better, mainly because it will give us ever increasing measures of this heart-knowledge of the love of Christ. How should we long for increasing measures of this love. Nay, can the Christian help longing for more of it? Can the ear filled with delightful harmony but long for more and sweeter music? Can the eye having glimpses of glory but long for fuller revelations? Can the heart having tasted that the Lord is good but earnestly desire full draughts of that goodness? O that we might all comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ.

But, Third. How can we be enabled to comprehend the infinitude and know the sweetness and power of Christ's love? Paul prays that "ye may be able *with all saints* to comprehend and know the love of Christ."

This knowledge is peculiar to the saints. It is taught by the Spirit of God and consists in such views of divine things as only He can give. It is "the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord." Others cannot possess it. Tell them that the love of Christ is infinite and they get but a vague and shadowy idea. Tell them that it is powerful, sweet and blissful and they do not understand you. Their hearts do not respond to your words. Teach a blind man all about light and color and form, until he can discourse most learnedly on these subjects, yet must he have his eyes opened before can know them, before he can have any heart-knowledge. Tell that brutalized old man who has never known father or mother, sister or brother, wife or child, all about the tenderness and power of domestic affection and you talk to a stone. He must be brought into these relations and educated into these

affections before he can know this love. So must all be saints before it is possible to know the love of Christ. Only when Jesus comes to be a living, loving, glorious Saviour to them will they comprehend and know his love.

2d. But it is still further necessary in order that this knowledge may fill and sanctify the heart that the heart be educated to love. A man may be a saint, a renewed man, and yet grace be in him as a grain of mustard seed. Other passions may have rivalled these and filled the soil, and grace has but just caused the seed of love to germinate. It is a little thing. The knowledge of the love of Christ will be a little thing there. Hence Paul prays "that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." He prays "that you, like a tree, may be rooted and growing in the very soil of love; that you like a house may have your foundation laid deep in love."

In other words that you may have a sense of Christ's love established in you, that you may be confirmed in the exercise of love and your capacity for loving called forth and strengthened. The greater your power to love the more will you comprehend and be impressed with the infinite love of Christ. The more you love Jesus the more will you know of his unknowable love. John knew more and possessed more of Christ's love than others because he was the loving disciple. Cultivate then the love of Christ.

And 3d. In order to our deep experience of love, the enlargement of our capacity to love, "Christ must dwell in our hearts by faith." Sometimes the Scriptures speak of God dwelling in his people. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them."

Sometimes it is said: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And here Paul prays that Christ may dwell in us. There are three persons, but one God. And Christ dwells where he peculiarly and permanently manifests his presence and power. His grace and spirit work all holy feelings and affections in the heart. Among these faith is first, the root of all. When the heart trusts in Jesus at once love flows and tears of peni-

tence come and all right feelings follow. Faith perceives the excellency of Jesus, the wonders of his love, and the riches of his grace, and thus sets the heart aglow with love to Him. "Faith works by love." The more, therefore, that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, the more shall we be rooted and grounded in love, and the more shall we know his love that passeth knowledge.

But Fourth. What is the end Paul has in view in thus praying? Why should we know the love of Christ? "That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God." "The fullness of God," may mean all that excellency of which God is full. And then the end for which Paul prays is that we may be filled with all divine excellencies, made full partakers of the divine nature, made perfect as our Father is perfect. The word translated "*with*" here may signify "*unto*." And then the expression means that we may be filled unto the fullness of God; "until we come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; until we come to the same perfection as men, which belongs to God as God: that we may be just and true and pure and good and loving and happy in our measure, as God is; that we may be excellent and blessed in the highest degree of which our natures are capable.

1st. Would you dear Christian be brought to this perfection? Only know the love of Christ, thereby enlarging your capacity of loving and thereby Christ dwelling in your heart by faith. As you love you become like God.

2d. Unconverted friends, would you know the love of Christ, its sweetness, power to melt in penitence, to comfort, to sanctify, to make perfect? Be saints rooted and grounded in love. Seek Christ to dwell in your hearts.