

## SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

One of the most plaintive poems ever written was "The Hound of Heaven." In it, Francis Thompson likens God's never-failing love to a hound sent from heaven, which, never leaving us, always hard upon our heels, follows us all the days of our life.

This wondrous thought had been revealed by God through His servant David millenniums ago. "Where shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Psalm 139:7-10.

Wherever we are, whatever we have done, God is always near at hand to forgive transgression and to bring comfort and peace.

How beautifully Jesus expressed the love of the heavenly Father toward His erring children, in that matchless story of the prodigal son! Even though the son had willfully, repeatedly, and deliberately turned his back upon his father, he had but to make one sign of repentance and the father ran to meet him. All the waywardness of the son could not prevent the father's love following the son every step of his prodigal way.

God's love for the sinner is such that He says: "I held him, and would not let him go." Song of Solomon 3:4. Indeed, God's love for His erring ones binds them to Him. He tells us that He has bound us about "with bands of love." Hosea 11:4. Expressing His tender love for the wanderer, He says: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." Isaiah 49:16.

The unchangeable love of God for the unworthy was demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ. Although of his special friends one sold him for the price of a common slave, another refused to believe his word, and still another denied him with oaths and curses, and all forsook him in the hour of crisis, it is recorded of him: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John 13:1. The love of the disciples might ebb and flow according to circumstances. But God's love in Christ Jesus is steadfast and unchanging.

Do men need God? Does a drowning man need a life preserver? Does a man in a burning building need a fire escape? Does a condemned criminal need a pardon? Does a sinner need a Saviour? He who made man in His own image is the only One who can restore that image. For degeneration there is but one remedy - regeneration. For the sin of man there is but one doctor - the Son of man. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

A woman friend of John Ruskin's once received as a gift a beautiful handkerchief, which she highly prized. But one day as she was writing, a drop of ink fell upon it, and it appeared to be ruined. Sometime later the great artist-writer was a guest in her home. Having heard of his hostess' accident and how bad she felt about it, he asked, first to see the handkerchief, then to take it home with him. A few days later she received it back, more beautiful than it was at first. What had he done? With his own deft hand he had painted on the cloth an exquisite picture, using the blot as a basis for it. What Ruskin did for a ruined handkerchief, Jesus does for ruined lives.

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Twas the night before Jesus came  
and all through the house  
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.  
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care  
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.  
The children were dressing to crawl into bed,  
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.  
And Mom in her rocker with the babe on her lap  
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.  
When out of the east there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!  
When what to my wondering eyes should appear  
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here!  
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray  
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!  
The light of his face made me cover my head  
It was Jesus! Returning just like he had said.  
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,  
I cried when I saw him in spite of myself.  
In the Book of Life, which he held in his hand,  
Was written the name of every saved man.  
He spoke not a word as he searched for my name;  
When he said, "It's not here,"  
My head hung in shame.  
The people whose names had been written above  
He gathered to meet with his Father of love.  
With those who were ready he rose without sound  
While all the rest were left standing around.  
I fell to my knees, but it was too late;  
I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.  
I stood and I cried as they went out of sight;  
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight!  
In the words of this poem the meaning is clear  
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.  
There's only one life, and when comes the last call  
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!