

Aughnacloy, Ballymagrane, Clogherney & Sixmilecross Presbyterian Churches

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Dear Friends

As your minister, it is a great privilege that I have in bringing this weekly devotion to you. This week our recorded service is taking the format of 'Children's Day'. The Sunday School teachers and leaders have helped the children to take part in video clips which will be shown in the broadcast worship service. Therefore, this week our devotion is slightly different. I have used a daily devotion entitled '*The Service of Passionate Devotion*' written by Oswald Chambers. Oswald was born in Aberdeen, Scotland on 24th July 1874 and spent much of his boyhood there. His ministry of teaching and preaching took him for a time to the United States and Japan. The last six years of his life were spent as principal of the Bible Training College in London, and as a chaplain to British Commonwealth troops in Egypt during World War I. After his death, 15th November 1917, the devotional books which bear his name were compiled by his wife from her own verbatim shorthand notes of his talks.

"The Service of Passionate Devotion". By Oswald Chambers

John 21:15-17 "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus did not say to make converts to your way of thinking, but He said to look after His sheep, to see that they get nourished in the knowledge of Him. We consider what we do in the way of Christian work as service, yet Jesus Christ calls service to be what we *are* to Him, not what we *do* for Him. Discipleship is based solely on devotion to Jesus Christ, not on following after a particular belief or doctrine. "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate..., he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). In this verse, there is no argument and no pressure from Jesus to follow Him; He is simply saying, in effect, "If you want to be My disciple, you must be devoted solely to Me." A person touched by the Spirit of God suddenly says, "Now I see who Jesus is!"— that is the source of devotion.

Today we have substituted doctrinal belief for personal belief, and that is why so many people are devoted to causes and so few are devoted to Jesus Christ. People do not really want to be devoted to Jesus, but only to the cause He started. Jesus Christ is deeply offensive to the educated minds of today, to those who only want Him to be their Friend, and who are unwilling to accept Him in any other way. Our Lord's primary obedience was to the will of His Father, not to the needs of people— the saving of people was the natural outcome of His obedience to the Father. If I am devoted solely to the cause of humanity, I will soon be exhausted and come to the point where my love will waver and stumble. But if I love Jesus Christ personally and passionately, I can serve humanity, even though people may treat me like a "doormat." The secret of a disciple's life is devotion to Jesus Christ, and the characteristic of that life is its seeming insignificance and its meekness. Yet it is like a grain of wheat that "falls into the ground and dies"— it will spring up and change the entire landscape (John 12:24).