



*The Love  
of God*

*Richard  
A. Bennett*

## The Love of God

*Dear friend,*

***I**n old age, when we are chastened by pain, some call it living in the 'Twilight Zone.' However, when the sun is setting, we see a glorious panorama of golden rays that could never be witnessed in the mid-day sun.*

*In His declining years, the apostle Paul wrote, "See what large letters I write unto you." As I was writing this little book, I kept chuckling to myself, "See what small letters I write unto you" as I discovered that I could not even read what I had just written!*

*Though, "The Love of God" is beyond human description, it is my prayer that the following messages will be as from the Lord and become a great blessing to you.*

*Always remember that information without application will lead to spiritual stagnation!*

*And now, it is with my love and prayers, that I relay these few thoughts on, "**The Love of God.**"*

*In the bonds of Calvary - Richard.*

## *Contents*

Chapter One page 3	<i>Incomprehensible Love</i>
Chapter Two page 8	<i>Inclusive Love - 1</i>
Chapter Three page 14	<i>Inclusive Love - 2</i>
Chapter Four page 20	<i>Insightful Love</i>
Chapter Five page 26	<i>Incomparable Love</i>
Chapter Six page 31	<i>Incontestable Love</i>
Chapter Seven page 37	<i>Inductive Love</i>
Chapter Eight page 43	<i>Influential Love</i>
Epilogue page 52	<i>Irresistible Love</i>

## *Incomprehensible Love*

*“To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge”*

Ephesians 3:19

**A**t first glance, this verse may appear to be a paradox of the first order. How is it possible for us to know something that passes knowledge? The renowned Bible expositor, Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, said this verse was the most difficult verse in the Bible for him to explain. Although it might appear audacious for me to attempt to write what this verse means to me, the Holy Spirit can graciously make it living in each of our hearts.

We are always blessed to read of the love of God in the Bible. In so doing we gain a *cognitive* understanding. This is head knowledge but not necessarily heart knowledge. Heart knowledge is a vital aspect of the love of Christ which can be described as *experiential* love. This love is the practical outworking of the love of God in the busyness of our personal life. Though head knowledge is foundational in and by itself, it is not adequate.

It is our prayer that the following Bible truths and personal testimonies will result in your enjoying an ever deepening

## The Love of God

personal experience of the love of God. This type of love cannot be documented or explained, but, praise the Lord, it can be experienced. No, it cannot be described, but it can be displayed! So, as we approach this theme, we will present one illustration and three personal demonstrations of such amazing love.

***“Love beareth all things”*** 1 Corinthians 13:7: Some time ago, Dorothy and I journeyed on a small ferry boat from Dover to Antwerp. While waiting in pouring rain for friends to pick us up at the quayside, we sheltered in the entrance of a small Belgian shop from which we observed an expensively dressed lady who had an immaculate hairstyle. She had a pretty umbrella but did not hold this over her head but, upon a sudden downpour, held it over her little son who was gleefully riding his tricycle along the water edge. The young child was oblivious to the rain and his mother seemed oblivious to her aching arm in the downpour. Instead, the mother joyfully smiled at her son, even though her hair and clothes became drenched by the rain. Her reward was that of her appreciative child.

Yes! True love bears all things. When the love of God flows through the heart of a believer, personal pain and discomfort are of little consequence.

***“Love envieth not”*** 1 Corinthians 13:4: Years ago as I was a minister at a London church, a wealthy lady was part of

## The Love of God

the congregation. This lady was a very devoted Christian but had suffered much heartache and shock. Her husband had left her and filed for a divorce. The divorce attorney suggested that, to finalize the financial agreements which involved large sums of money, all legal signatories should meet for lunch. In anticipation of that luncheon, the Christian lady purchased a beautiful red rose. When arriving before the other guests, she placed the rose on the table setting of her husband's new wife. Beside it she put a note of well-wishes for her and her husband's future happiness.

Impossible, you might think! If it were just a matter of human emotion, surely resentment would be the natural reaction. In this case, the love of God prevailed, which "*envieth not*" verse 4.

***"Love suffereth long and is kind"*** 1 Corinthians 13:4: Years later, when ministering at a church on the East Coast of America, a lady shared: "This has been a very difficult week for me. All week I sat in a courtroom and witnessed my son convicted and sentenced to prison for the next 20 years." She continued to share that he had been a police officer employed by the State but had also cooperated in illegal activities with a criminal gang. It was with obvious grief, that this mother explained how that, before the trial commenced, an insider in the legal system approached her

## The Love of God

to suggest that if she would place a large sum of money in a designated place, it could be arranged that her son need never go to trial. “I could never join my son’s illegal activities, and comply with this request. But, I want you to know that my mother’s heart of love will be with my son in the prison cell every day for the next 20 years.”

How is it possible for the *devotion* of love, the *discipline* of love and the *denial* of love to coexist in a mother’s heart? Both she and her son’s reputation were in jeopardy as was his future job security. However, this dear Christian lady lived on a much higher plane. She experienced the enabling grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as incomprehensible love prevailed: “*Love suffereth long and is kind.*”

**“*Love never faileth*”** 1 Corinthians 13:8. A pastor, who I knew very well, was introduced to an opera singer in the terminal stages of cancer. She was a beautiful, 29-year-old lady approaching the height of fame in the operatic world. Shockingly, the doctor had just informed her that her cancer was irreversible and that her time on earth would now be very short. The pastor met in the hospital with the unsaved husband and the cancer patient. After counsel, the husband knelt by his wife’s bed. She prayed: “Lord, I thank You that You love me so much that You allowed this cancer. If this had not been, I would still be

## The Love of God

caught up in the whirl of the operatic world. Thank You that now I have found new life in Christ!” With tears streaming down both their faces, the husband also gladly received the Lord Jesus Christ.

Together in life; together in Christ; together in hope and one day together in heaven with Him! What is more glorious than that? *Love never faileth!*

Sometimes on the mount where the sun shines so bright,  
God leads His dear children along;  
Sometimes in the valley, in darkest of night,  
God leads His dear children along.

Some through the waters, some through the flood,  
Some through the fire, but all through the blood;  
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,  
In the night season and all the day long.

~ George A. Young 1855-1935.

### *Spiritual Check-up*

\* When I face pain, disappointment or betrayal, do I react with hasty emotion and a ‘pity me’ complex, or does the love of God prevail “*that passes all understanding*”?

\* Is my love for my children built on sentiment, ambition and pride, or do I reflect with them the devotion of God’s love; the discipline of God’s love and the denial of God’s love?



## *Inclusive Love - I*

“. . . what is the **breadth**, and **length**,”

*Ephesians 3:18*

A personal heart-warming experience of the love of God is totally incomprehensible! I once heard ‘love’ defined: “Love is a feeling, you feel you are going to feel, when you feel you have a feeling, you feel you never felt before.” That may be a definition of emotion which waxes and wanes according to circumstances, but it is the antithesis of true love. When a husband says to his wife, “I don’t love you anymore,” what he is really saying is, “I never truly loved you because I really love myself.”

When introduced to God’s astonishing love, as expressed to every person in every generation, it is so overwhelming that, to comprehend its significance, we need to be strengthened in our inner man. *“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; 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.”* Ephesians 3:16-19.

This love is not produced by man-made efforts. Only the illumination and the strengthening of the Holy Spirit can produce a comprehension of God's love: "Spirit of God, my Teacher be, revealing the love of Christ to me."

***"Length"*** - **His historic love!** In the Garden of Eden, God loved Adam as He communed with him in the cool of the day. This wonderful fellowship, which existed in the presence of Eternal Light and resplendent Glory, was severed when Adam sinned. However, though both Adam and Eve were stripped of the glory of God and became shamefully conscious of their nakedness, God continued to demonstrate His love. So how did God demonstrate His love to Adam even after he sinned and plunged all his descendants into disaster and death?

*"The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them"*  
Genesis 3:21. To acquire a coat of skin required the slaying of an animal. This, of course, meant the shedding of blood. In the fullness of time, the invisible God stepped out of eternity and into time to become visible in the person of God the Son. This was no emergency measure to meet an unexpected crisis. We read, Jesus was *"the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world"* Revelation 13:8. *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* John 1:29. When the Lord Jesus shed His *"precious blood,"* (1 Peter 1:19), His sacrifice was sufficient

for everybody but it is only efficient for those who believe in Him. Just as Adam and Eve were then clothed, so wonder of wonders, the Blood-washed believer is clothed with the righteousness of God!

**Father and Son** - King David was the father; Absalom was his much loved son. Tragically, his son despised his father's love and incited an insurrection in an effort to dethrone his father and enthrone himself. This followed the pattern of Satan's ambition who said: "*I will exalt myself and I will be like the Most High [God]*" Isa. 14:13,14. Likewise, in Satan's ambition to enthrone himself, he incited the crowds to cry, "*Crucify Him, crucify Him.*" Little did he realize that this act would result in the Blood of the Lord Jesus being shed. It was this precious Blood that spelled Satan's own defeat. Never minimize sin, never magnify it so that you think it is too big for God to handle. "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*" Psalm 76:10.

In similar fashion, when the heartbreaking news of Absalom's death reached the ears of King David, he sobbed, "*Oh my son, my son, my son Absalom! Would to God that I had died for thee. Oh Absalom, my son, my son!*" 2 Samuel 18:33. Though David could not die for the sin of Absalom, the Lord Jesus, in fact, did die for your sin and mine. Today we can rejoice in the 'finished work'

of Christ for our salvation. There is nothing we can add, and there is nothing we can do to nullify the finished work of Christ. His last cry from the cross was, "***It is finished***" John 19:30. To this very day, the Lord Jesus still pleads with men and women, boys and girls: "*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*" Matthew 11:28.

***"Breadth"*** - **His geographic love!** "*For God so loved the world ...*" John 3:16. Yes, the love of God embraces every person on every continent in every country and in every home. Staggering!

During the dark days of Apartheid in South Africa, the authorities commandeered Robben Island, just off the coast of Cape Town. It was an inhospitable prison. Constrained by the love of Christ, Christians received permission from the authorities to visit this Island and distribute small copies of the New Testament among the prisoners. However, the thinness and the size of the New Testament paper was utilized by many prisoners to tear out, roll tobacco, and make cigarettes. When smoked, the cigarette stubs were scattered around the prison compound.

One day, idle curiosity caused a prisoner to pick up a cigarette stub and read on the paper: "*For God so loved the world.*" "Whoever could love such a rotten world as

this?" he mused. As time passed, he reflected, "If there is such a God as this, then I want to know Him." In the providence of God, he met another visitor to the prison who explained the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to him. He gladly repented and received Christ as his personal Savior! Does the distribution of Bibles and missionary literature really count? Yes, a thousand times, yes! In whatever remote part of the world people may be, God's love still reaches them through His Word!

On my first journey to America, I was able to acquire a berth in the hold of a Greek cargo vessel. It was an up and down experience! On that ship, I purposed to witness to the other three men in my cabin and to all the people seated at my assigned eating table. God must have had a special interest in a man who happened to be in my cabin and also at my table. When talking with him on the rolling windswept deck in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, he told me how he had left his Christian fiancé and his godly parents in Scotland without telling them he was leaving home until the very day he sailed. "I've left God and my Christian family behind me," he said. "Now I am headed for a new life in Canada." The Psalmist wrote, "*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 139:9-10. And so it was

with this runaway prodigal as we prayed together on the storm-tossed deck.

As a hound follows a hare, so the love of God pursues a fleeing soul. In his day, Francis Thompson was also on the 'run away' from God. He was hopelessly addicted to a cocaine habit. After being gloriously converted to Christ, he penned a classic poem titled, *The Hound of Heaven*. "For though I knew the love of Him who followed, yet was I sore adread, lest having Him I might have naught beside." Weary of running from God, he continued, "Me halts me by the footfall, is my gloom after all, love of His hand outstretched caressingly?" Then, in his picturesque way, Thompson described the voice of a loving God: "O fondest; blindest; weakest, I am He whom thou seekest, thou drawest love from Me who drawest thee." The inclusive love of God still reaches out today to hurting and needy people around the world. "*The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few*" Luke 10:2.

### *Spiritual Check-up*

- \* In these last days, will I become God's devoted laborer in His harvest field?
- \* Although His sacrifice was *sufficient* for everybody - but it is only *efficient* for those who believe in Him - how does this affect my response to Him?

## *Inclusive Love - II*

*“what is the . . . depth, and height,”*

Ephesians 3:18

**I**n the previous chapter of *Inclusive Love*, we considered both the historic and geographic dimension of *The Love of God*—the *breadth* and the *length*. In this second part, we will reflect upon the hypostatic and the organic love of God—its *depth* and *height*.

These are two of the four wonders of God’s amazing love we are able to comprehend that you, “*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*” Ephesians 3:18.

**“Depth,” His hypostatic love.** The hypostatic nature of the Lord Jesus Christ means that the invisible God became visible in the person of God the Son. As Man, Jesus was perfect but He was never ever less than God. The Bible states: “*God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man.*” James 1:13.

But Jesus is God and Jesus **was** tempted. He was tempted as a perfect Man. In His victory over Satan He revealed to

## The Love of God

man what God created man to be. As God, He revealed to man Who God is, "*from everlasting to everlasting*" Psalm 103:17.

The astonishing truth is this God introduced Himself to mankind through the womb of a virgin. When the Virgin Mary asked the angel Gabriel "*How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*" Gabriel answered: "*The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called **the Son of God***" Luke 1:34, 35.

Yes, "*Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not to be robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*" Philippians 2:6-10. What condescension!

From God to Man, from Man to servant-hood, from servant-hood to obedience, from obedience to the Cross. Then from resurrection and ascension to the Throne of the universe. Oh the depth of God's love enabling us to



## The Love of God

restore our broken fellowship with the Eternal God.

Equally astonishing is the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit as God is still bringing to birth His Church! *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body”* 1 Corinthians 12:13.

This dramatic implication is: *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* Romans 6:3,4.

*“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him”* 1 Corinthians 12:18. This body of Christ, the true Church, is inclusive in composition, but it is also exclusive in character.

**Inclusive in composition.** The true Church knows no class limitation, no capacity limitation and no color limitation. Poor and rich; uneducated and educated; old and young; red, yellow, black and white are welcomed into the fellowship of the Church.

**Exclusive in character.** However, membership in the body of Christ is not open for people who are not born again. All true members of the body of Christ are sinners saved by grace.

## The Love of God

Sometimes, in an effort to popularize and grow a church, well-meaning pulpit committees will look for people with attractive personalities, musical talents, and theological degrees. And, if a person of financial resources can be introduced to the Board that will make the church more important.

The Lord Jesus did not die to Christianize the flesh and then to set it in service for Him. He came to crucify the flesh! Only then His ministry in the Church will be demonstrated by His resurrection Life, His redeeming love, and His heavenly wisdom.

There is often too much 'grit' and not enough 'oil' in the function of many church structures and mission agencies. Human ambition, pride, selfish preference and discord will quench the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**In Christ:** *"Therefore, if any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* 2 Corinthians 5:17. It is important to realize, that being in Christ, we have not been left to our own devices to lift ourselves up by our own 'bootstraps.' Neither are we expected to hold everything together by psychological 'Band-Aids.' The phrase, "*in Christ*," is repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament and is a topic of no small importance.

## The Love of God

**“Height,” His Organic Love:** *“Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?”* 1 Corinthians 6:15. In Christ, we have been *“raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* Ephesians 2:6.

Being assured that we are *“in Christ,”* from this heavenly perspective, faith rejoices that, what is under the feet of Jesus, is also under our feet because we are in Him! When Peter stepped out of the fishing boat to walk on water, the waves that threatened Peter were already under the feet of Jesus. Because we have been baptized into the body of Christ, the threatening waves of a world-in-crisis are already under the feet of the Risen Christ and therefore under our feet. *“and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly”* Romans 16:20.

Facing daily testing, whether social; financial; the loss of a loved one; or even the lust of the flesh, to *“walk by faith, not by sight”* (2 Corinthians 5:7) is to appropriate the fact that we do not fight a fight that could be lost, but we enjoy a victory in the Risen Lord that has been secured forever. Either we live by faith or we die by unbelief. The turbulent waves of the 21st century that increasingly threaten and seek to destroy the Church are already under the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are we in Him? Yes! Yes! Yes! So when we know we are in Him, the waves that are under His feet, are also under our feet. We are

## The Love of God

already “*in heavenly places.*” From the perspective of reigning “*in life by One, Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:17) as we praise Him, we are on top of any challenging circumstances as they are already under our feet in Him. That is the life of faith!

As the late Vernon McGee frequently quoted: “In Christ I died; in Christ I rose; in Christ I triumphed o’er my foes; in Christ in heaven I took my seat; and heaven rejoiced at hell’s defeat.”

It passes knowledge that dear love of Thine,  
My Jesus, Saviour; yet this soul of mine  
Would of Thy love, in all its breadth and length,  
Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,  
Know more and more.

~Mary Skekleton 1827-1883

### *Spiritual Check-up*

\* Do I see a problem in every opportunity, or, knowing I am ‘in Christ,’ do I see an opportunity of proving His sufficiency in every problem?

\* Though an atheist says he does not believe in God, and acts accordingly, do I, who professes belief that Christ was manifest in the flesh and that I am in Him, act any different from the atheist?

## *Insightful Love*

*“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;  
be zealous therefore and repent”*

Revelation 3:19

When the love of God chastens us, it is not that it may produce a sense of shame and failure and guilt. It is God’s loving method of refining and purifying our lives for our eternal good and for His eternal glory.

In Hebrews 12:29 we read: *“For our God is a consuming fire.”* As fire, the Lord consumes all He cannot purify, and as fire, He purifies all He cannot consume. Personal revival commences when a believer comes to the ‘Judgment Seat of Christ’ ahead of time. There, in the light of God’s eternal glory and holiness, He brings to ashes all the purposeless values and priorities of our lives. But praise God, He gives, *“beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”* Isaiah 61:3. That is personal revival!

King David was aware that he could not hide behind words and call it prayer. He reflected, *“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, Thou understandeth my thought afar off”* Psalm

## The Love of God

139:1,2. David also mused how that God was fully aware of the way he had trod; of the words he had spoken; and of his whereabouts at all times. That is a sobering thought.

When David became shamefully conscious how God knew all he had thought and done, he asked Him to reveal this knowledge: “**Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart: **try** me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and **lead** me in the way everlasting” Psalm 139:23, 24.

“**Search**” “Throw light into the darkened cells, where passion reigns within; quicken my conscience ‘til it feels the loathsomeness of sin.” Francis Bottome [FB].

Many years ago when ministering on the Canadian Prairies, Dorothy and I were blessed to be entertained by a very poor couple. Early one morning, we awoke at the roar of three helicopters which landed on a field behind the little house. We discovered they brought prospectors to drill in search of uranium to send soil samples to scientists in Toronto. To find a trace of valuable uranium would necessitate much worthless soil being discarded. When the Lord—our Divine Prospector—searches our hearts, He places no value on the soil of self-centered pursuits, but counts as eternal value, the precious fruit of the Spirit.

## The Love of God

**“Know”**: The mind is the engine that drives our actions. “Search all my thoughts, the secret springs, the motives that control; the rebel heart, where evil things hold empire over my soul” [FB]. When God reveals the secret springs of the soul, it can be a life-transforming experience. “Thus prostrate I shall learn of Thee, what now I feebly prove, that God alone in Christ can be unutterable love” [FB].

God declares: *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways”* Isaiah 55:8. Accordingly, Paul exhorts believers to: *“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind”* Ephesians 4:23. That is, not what I desire but what He wants! The Bible also says: *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* Philippians 2:5.

The Lord Jesus humbled Himself in His earthly walk. And for ourselves, pride and self-sufficiency are the antithesis of faith. Humble dependence upon the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus is the true expression of living faith.

**“Try”**: When God permits my testing, temptation, domestic difficulty, or health problem, this is not to destroy my faith. It is meant to purify my faith even as gold is tried in the fire: *“That the trial of your faith, being much **more precious than of gold** that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”* 1 Peter 1:7.

## The Love of God

**“Lead”:** After the heart has been exposed to the fire of God, guidance is not a perplexing issue. The story is told of the man who reached a crossroad, and, not knowing which way to go, he threw his walking stick in the air believing it would point him in the right direction. He repeated the procedure two times and then proceeded to walk the road to which the walking stick pointed. A bystander inquired, “Why did you throw your stick up in the air three times?” The answer: “Well the first two times, it didn’t point to the way I wanted to go!” Sadly, that is true for many of us seeking God’s guidance!

Jacob said to his son Reuben, “*Thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength ... [but you are] “unstable as water”* Genesis 49:3,4. Sadly, this is an apt description of an irresponsible Christian.

The glorified Lord Jesus Christ, addressed the church at Laodicea: “*I know*” and “*thou knowest not*” Revelation 3:15,17. He then told them what He knew and what they needed to know—including the fact that the church at Laodicea was lukewarm!

Also, “*Thou sayest, I have need of nothing*” verse 17. The expectation of a retirement income, Social Security, and medical insurance causes many people to live in complacency, trusting in their own resources, rather than in the promises of God to supply their daily bread. Such



## The Love of God

independent living, was exposed when the Lord Jesus said: *“Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”* verse 17. This is hardly the way that many churches employ to win friends and influence people! But the honest exposure of need through the preaching of the Word is the prerequisite for the Lord Jesus to meet that need.

The Lord Jesus continued, *“I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; [true spiritual **value**] and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear [true spiritual **virtue**] and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see [true spiritual **vision**”* Revelation 3:18.

How does such value, virtue, and vision become mine? It is all available when Christ enters the human heart: *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me”* verse 20. In St. Paul’s Cathedral, there hangs the original classic painting of the renowned artist Hoffman Hunt. A little boy looking at the picture of the Lord Jesus standing at a door and knocking, said: “The artist forgot to put a handle on the door!” Mr. Hunt, who was standing nearby, smilingly answered, “Sonny, the door can only be opened from the inside.” He

## The Love of God

then proceeded to share the need for every person to open the door of their heart to personally receive the Lord Jesus as Savior! It is your responsibility to open the door of your life and invite Him to come in as Lord and Savior.

When Jesus comes into your life, as has been succinctly said, He becomes “the dynamic of His own demands; the cause of His own effect; the source of His own activity and the origin of His own purpose” This results in **Jesus** first; **Others** second; **Yourself** last – heavenly **JOY!**

Walk in the light, so shall you know  
That fellowship of love  
His Spirit only can bestow,  
Who reigns in light above.

Walk in the light—and sin abhorred  
Shall not defile again;  
The blood of Jesus Christ the Lord  
Shall cleanse from every stain.

~Bernard Barton 1784-1849

### *Spiritual Check-up*

\* Do I recognize that God is using my present circumstances to refine my life for eternity?

\* What is the true value of my life? Do self-centered priorities and pleasures govern the choices I make?

***Think about this for a while. In the presence of God, give Him the answer and may God bless you as you do so!***

## *Love Incomparable*

*“And now abideth faith, hope and love, **but the greatest of these is love. Follow after love”***

1 Corinthians 13:13; 14:1

**I**n addressing the church at Ephesus, the glorified Christ said: *“Thou hast left thy first love”* Revelation 2:4. In spite of this, they still defended their faith against the influence of the Nicolaitans who, though they professed to be Christians, lived in a licentious manner. The Lord Jesus said *“Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate”* Revelation 2:6.

He also said: *“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience”* verse 2. They were a busy, busy church. So, having left their first love, what was missing? The structure of the Church continued but the essential core of faith, hope and love was absent.

To the Thessalonica church, Paul wrote, *“Remembering without ceasing your work of **faith**, your labor of **love**, and your patience of **hope**”* 1 Thessalonians 1:3.

The church at Ephesus had lost their first love; they worked without faith, they labored without love, and they

## The Love of God

had patience without hope. And so, the propulsion of the Holy Spirit's activity waned. Work without faith is fruitless: *"For without faith it is impossible to please God"* Hebrews 11:6. Labor without love is unrewarding – day after day, the same old thing! Patience without hope is frustrating: *"Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us"* Romans 5:4,5. Are you ashamed to own your Lord or to defend His cause in your secular environment?

Deflection of a believer to the world is not necessarily a sudden blow-out, it is often a slow leak. Let us all beware of close friendships that dampen our love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

A devastating avalanche in the Swiss Alps was not triggered by an earthquake. Papers reported that as the sun shed its warm rays on the snow, the force of adhesion was gradually overcome by the force of gravity. As a result, the consequences were devastating. Sadly, many people at the bottom of the mountain were killed.

And deflection from a labor of love to the fascination of the world is a problem many Christians face. In sadness of heart, the Apostle Paul wrote, *"Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world"* 2 Timothy 4:10.

## The Love of God

What is the “*present world*” that deflects us from the love of God? “*All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*”<sup>1</sup> John 2:16: “**Flesh**,” that means pleasure without responsibility; “**Eyes**,” that means possessions without responsibility; “**Pride**,” that means position without responsibility. If you took these lust patterns away from television advertising you would not have much left!

Before train engines were propelled by diesel or electricity, steam was the propelling power. In the engine room, a driver whose face was black with coal dust, would stoke the boiler fire to maintain the pressure of steam. If the fire went out, the train would continue to roll down the tracks by momentum, but there was no more propulsion. So gradually the train would grind to a halt.

With the demise of the dynamic propulsion of the Holy Spirit in the Church, zealous Christians today try to fill the gap. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come. (John 16:8). Building programs; professional money raisers, and administrative ‘know-how’ are no substitute for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Platform personalities and performance can never replace the priority of preaching God’s Word and prayer!

Never think defensively! When Montgomery, the English

## The Love of God

General was appointed to fight the highly successful German general Rommel in North Africa, he faced a very difficult task. It was at this time that Churchill sent him a telegram: "In your headquarters, you are never to think defensively. You must always plan for attack." Today, the language of 'attack' is seldom heard in the church; we are more interested in survival than we are in revival!

The Lord Jesus said: "*Because thou art lukewarm . . . I will spue thee out of My mouth*" Revelation 3:16. I am reminded that before I was called into the ministry, one of my tasks in developing a plan for the renovation of the city, was to survey the area and discover the land use. In so doing, I sadly observed that many churches, built at the sacrificial expense of loving believers in the previous century, had been converted into garages, roller skating rinks and office blocks. The Baptist church that commissioned William Carey, the pioneer missionary to India, is now a Muslim mosque.

In this era of increasing deception in the church, resulting in the intrusion of worldly cares at worship time and the pining for worldly pleasures, militant anti-god forces have invaded the land. Regardless of personal consequence, let us engage in spiritual attack instead of compromising defense. Boldly, "*Speak the truth in love*" Ephesians 4:15.

Praise the Lord! When Christians, who have lost their first

## The Love of God

love, radically repent, God will open a door to personal restoration with resultant church blessing. *“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”* Galatians 6:14.

Living in the days of mighty revival in England, which saved England from the revolution that was currently taking place in France, John Wesley described the engulfing flow of God’s love among the people as “a baptism of love.” May that be true today!

O Breath of Love, come, breathe within us,  
Renewing thought and will and heart:  
Come love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
Revive Thy church in every part.

~ Bessie Porter Head.

### *Spiritual Check-up*

\* Was there ever a time in my life when I loved the Lord Jesus more than I do today?

\* Responding to the love of God, do I plan for my own personal security, or am I willing to engage in spiritual attack by, *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”*? Ephesians 6:17.

***Think about this for a while and give the Lord your answer as you worship Him in spirit and in truth!***

## *Incontestable Love*

*“ . . . though I have knowledge,”*

1 Corinthians 13:2

**J**ust as a ray of light enters a glass prism and emerges in all the beautiful hues of the rainbow, so love enters the mind of Paul’s illuminated intelligence and emerges in the glorious spectrum of the fruit of **the love of God**. This is described in chapter thirteen of first Corinthians.

It is interesting to note, that the first three verses of this chapter compare the much-to-be-desired gifts, with the very essence of the true love of God. The common pattern of thought in each of these verses is, though I have ‘this,’ and not, ‘that.’ A few of these statements are quoted from the Amplified Bible [AB].

**No spiritual reality:** *“If I [can] speak with the tongues of men and [even] of angels, but have not love (that reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion such as is inspired by God’s love for us and in us), I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal”* 1 Cor. 13:1 [AB.] In other words, oratorical flourishes, devoid of God’s love, are not necessarily spiritually influential.



## The Love of God

**No spiritual results:** *“And if I have prophetic powers (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose), - and have all knowledge; and though I have all faith - but have not love (God’s love in me) I am nothing (a useless nobody) 1 Cor. 13:2 [AB/KJV].* Yes, though I have much knowledge and am able to expound Bible truth with clarity to even describe the characteristics of God’s love, to do that without portraying a character of genuine love, is to become a useless nobody.

**No spiritual reward:** *“I gain nothing.”* The somber truth is that much talk does not spell spiritual reality and much **knowledge** does not form a Christian character. *“Even if I dole out all that I have [to the poor in providing] food . . . and have not love (God’s love in me), I gain nothing”* verse 3 [AB]. Although ignoring God, politicians will institute programs of welfare for the poor. However, these programs, obviously, show no concern for the spiritual welfare of the poor. What is the point of going to hell with a full tummy? Such people need our spiritual help.

Job said: *“For I **know** that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: Job 19:25.* The apostle Paul testified: *“I **know** whom [not what] I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day”* 2 Timothy 1:12.

## The Love of God

The apostle John, who had witnessed the astonishing life and deeds of the Lord Jesus during His time on earth, concluded: *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name”* John 20:31. And, *“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye might **know** that ye have eternal life”* 1 John 5:12,13.

The apostle Paul also prayed, *“That I may **know** Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death”* Philippians 3:10. So the question comes to you and me, do we read the Bible to get to know the Bible, or do we read the Bible to get to know the God of the Bible? There is a very big difference.

The apostle John twice commended ‘fathers’ in the church with an identical statement, *“because ye have **known** Him that is from the beginning.”* However, each introduction to this statement is different: *“I write to you”* 1 John 2:13 and *“I have written you”* 1 John 2:14. In other words, the ‘fathers’ had been commended in the past and now John applauds them for their continued faithfulness. Throughout the long years of their lives, they knew the saving power of the Lord Jesus in their courtship, in their

## The Love of God

marriage, in the raising of their children, in their career and in every circumstance whether in their sickness or even in their old age. That is the fruit of knowing God and His Word in each of us!

Many of us find a great blessing in sitting under the ministry of men of God who have read their Bible on their knees every day. When we listen to such teaching, our Bible knowledge certainly increases and as a result our walk with God is greatly encouraged. But, information without application inevitably leads to spiritual erosion!

Let us be much aware that, **knowledge** puffs up but love builds up: *“**Knowledge** puffeth up, but love edifieth. And if any man think that he **knoweth** anything, he **knoweth** nothing yet as he ought to **know**, but if any man love God the same is **known** of Him”* 1 Corinthians 8:1,2. When speaking of the Lord Jesus, John the Baptist said, *“He must increase; I must decrease”* John 3:30.

When I hear a teaching from the Bible with which I am already familiar, it is God’s purpose for me to understand its fresh application for my life today. If I receive the Word of God without the Lord Jesus increasing and my decreasing, I have gained academic possibilities without spiritual reality in my Christian life.

For the multiplicity of home Bible study groups and the availability of radio Bible teaching, some good, some bad,

## The Love of God

and some indifferent, from coast to coast, 24/7, one wonders why the moral climate across America continues to decline at such an alarming rate. It is because the Word of God is not being applied to the heart of the reader.

I am thoroughly convinced that, for all who have been born again, the Bible teaches a pre-tribulation Rapture. But I am also aware that increasingly we hear of what I refer to as a 'pre-tribulation tribulation,' this is when the wrath of sinful man is poured out upon Christ followers. Just as "*birth pangs*" increase in intensity and frequency before a baby is born, (Mark 13:8) so we hear of Christians being beheaded; of natural catastrophes increasing; and governments seeking to seal the lips of true believers.

Surely the days in which we live are critical indeed. The explosion of present world-wide trends, prophesied in the Bible, indicate that we are quickly approaching the period of the Great Tribulation when the love of God will be replaced by the wrath of the Lamb: "*The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*" Rev. 6:17.

To profess to love the Lord Jesus is a contradiction of what we profess to believe if we have sealed lips when mingling with people in a world headed for what is described in Mathew 24:21: "*then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*"

## The Love of God

Just after Dorothy and I were engaged, she must have wearied her associates as she showed her engagement ring and excitedly spoke of Richard Bennett, the man of her life! Yes, she really does love me!

Is your love for the Lord Jesus expressed in words and in ways as you witness of His love to unsaved colleagues and friends? Pride, and the love of popularity, always resist lining up with the despised and rejected Lord Jesus. Yes: *“He was despised and rejected of men”* Isaiah 53:3.

The sin of omission and lack of glad confession of our Lord Jesus, needs to be confessed at the Cross. It is only there that our lips will be set free to speak well of the Lover of our soul!

Am I a soldier of the cross,  
A follower of the Lamb!  
And shall I fear to own His cause,  
Or blush to speak His name?

~Isaac Watts 1674-1748.

### *Spiritual Check-up*

- \* Do I know more of God's love than what I express to other people in my daily living and words?
- \* Do I only love people because they are candidates for conversion, or do I love people because they are people?

*Before you go any further, take time to respond now to the Lord Jesus, and give Him your prayerful answers.*

## *Inductive Love*

*“Hereby perceive we the love of God”*

1 John 3:16

A light bulb is a simple apparatus that converts electric energy into light energy. According to the law of consumption of energy, “Energy can neither be created nor destroyed. It simply changes form into something that can be used.” Wire is needed to conduct energy from a generator or solar panel to the light bulb.

The same is true of the light and love of God. Faith is the conductor that transmits life and love from its Source in the Eternal Godhead to the heart of the believer. Though the flesh will gladly volunteer to simulate love, it is only the humility of dependent faith that will transmit the light and love of the Lord Jesus to and through the heart of the believer.

A Jewish commentary says: “Prior to creation, there existed nothing but the glory of God.”

Immediately following His first act of creation, God said: *“Let there be light, and there was light”* Genesis 1:3. This was not the light of the sun as this was not yet created.

## The Love of God

However, the prime creation was bathed in the light of God's eternal glory. It was not until the fourth day that God said: "*Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven . . . and God made two great lights; the greater light to rule by day, the lesser light to rule by night, He made the stars also*" Genesis 1:14,16.

Later the prophet Isaiah wrote: "***Arise, shine, for Thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee***" Isaiah 60:1.

Isaiah then travels in a prophetic time machine from when God clothed Himself with flesh in the person of Baby Jesus, to the eternal city of Jerusalem, of which: "*The sun shall be no more thy light by day: neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy glory*" Isaiah 60:19.

At the end of time, the apostle John describes this city as, "*The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof*" Revelation 21:23. So the Bible tells us that both the glory and the light of God were demonstrated at the beginning of time, and they will again be demonstrated when time melts back into eternity.

The light of God cannot be destroyed. It is transmitted to people who live in a world of spiritual darkness. It is an

## The Love of God

inexhaustible supply!

We know that the moon was not designed to create light. All the moon can do is to reflect light that is generated by the sun. We read, *“For God who commandeth light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* 2 Corinthians 4:6.

However, just as when the earth is positioned between the sun and the moon, there is a total eclipse; likewise, when the love of self and the love of the world intervene between the light of the Savior's love and the believer, there is a spiritual eclipse. Sadly, friends and neighbors no longer see the reflection of the Savior's love.

Because God knows it is impossible for you and me to generate both light and love, in and of ourselves, He displayed His own light and love in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, *“They that dwell in the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shone”* Isaiah 9:2.

The Lord Jesus declared, *“I am the light of the world”* John 8:12. He also said to His followers, *“Ye are the light of the world”* Matthew 5:14. The source of light is the Lord Jesus. The reflectors of light are born again children of God. Not only did God say that He is light, we also read, *“God is love”* 1 John 4:8. As such, He is not only the source



## The Love of God

of light, but He is also the source of agape love. *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love”* 1 John 4:7, 8.

Again, *“By this we perceive the love of God because He laid down His life for us, and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* 1 John 3:16.

What does it mean to lay down our life for the brethren? It is demonstrated when we lay down the manifold advantages of our education, our culture and our possessions at the foot of the cross for the blessing of other people and for the glory of God.

Have the multiple blessings, which God has bestowed upon us, been brought to a halt in a ‘dead-end street’ and been utilized for our own benefit, or have God’s blessings traveled on a ‘freeway’ to bless other people? The apostle Paul testified how to “*lay down our life*” works on a day by day basis:

First, **Elimination:** *“Those things that were gain to me, I have counted loss for Christ.”* Philippians 3:7.

Years ago a young lad passed me as I shook hands with the congregation after the morning service. With tears streaming down his face, we left the other people, and he told me, “I’ve disobeyed God!” Apparently, he was

## The Love of God

carrying his very own dime, with which he wanted to spend for an ice cream. As the missionary offering plate passed, he felt he ought to give his dime, but he kept it in his pocket. "Sir, is it too late?" he asked. What could I say or do? So we prayed together, and I thanked God I was witnessing two miracles: The first was a young boy who now wanted to obey God rather than lick an ice cream: The second was that through such love offerings, boys and girls in faraway places would have the opportunity to hear of the love of Jesus. He gladly put his ten cents into my hand for Missions:

After 'Elimination' comes **Concentration**: "but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead" Philippians 3:13 (NASB).

Living fellowship with the Risen Christ involves finding His will; following His will; and finishing His will, with the supreme goal of knowing Him.

This was exemplified through the pioneer missionary to India, C.T. Studd. Charlie fell in love with Priscilla, a very devoted Christian. During their engagement days, mission assignments precluded them being together on a regular basis. He wrote: "My darling Priscilla, I want you to pray every day 'Lord Jesus, I love You. You are dearer to me than ever Charlie could be.'" *"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that*

## The Love of God

*loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”*

Matthew 10:37.

Then comes, **Acceleration:** *“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* Phil. 3:14.

“I love Thee, Lord, but with no love of mine, for I have none to give; I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine. For by Thy love I know I am as nothing, and rejoice to be emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in Thee.”

*“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith”* Hebrews 12:1-2.

We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling,  
And needing more each day Thy grace to know:  
Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing,  
“We rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go.”

~Edith G. Cherry, 1895.

### *Spiritual Check-up*

\* Do I excuse my present spiritual inertia on past traumas and disappointments, or do I forget that which is behind and “*press toward the mark*”?

\*Am I “*looking unto Jesus*” in spite of physical, financial or circumstantial limitation?

*May the Lord work in each of our hearts as we face these questions in the presence of God and may I give Him the response of faith and obedience.*

## *Influential Love*

*“ . . . for the glory of God ”*

John 11:4

**J**ust nine letters in two words constitute the shortest verse in the Bible – “*Jesus wept*” John 11:35. As the Savior wept, He demonstrated His deep compassion for the family He loved. He also shed tears for a city: “*He beheld the city, and wept over it*” Luke 19:41. In each case, the Lord Jesus was confronted with unbelief and He wept.

**The Family:** The lovingly knit family of Mary, Martha and Lazarus had suddenly found their close family ties broken when Lazarus died. At that time, the Lord Jesus was two-day’s journey away from these loved ones. When the disciples shared the news of Lazarus, Jesus did not go into a panic mode and rush to the scene, but delayed two days before commencing His journey. He said to His disciples: “*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there . . .*” If the Lord Jesus had been with Mary and Martha before Lazarus died, He would have healed him. But Jesus said: “*I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that you might believe*” John 11:15.

## The Love of God

Living faith is not only demonstrated by thanksgiving on the mountain top of blessings, but more especially in the valley of testing. If my faith in the love of God is confined to thankfulness for material blessings, good health, family tranquility, and financial security, I am missing the point.

Although Martha knew **what** she believed, when facing a crisis, she did not demonstrate faith in **whom** she believed. She had correct Christology: *“I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world”* John 11:27. Unlike the Sadducees, Martha also had correct eschatology: *“I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day”* verse 24. Martha was also very busy serving the Christian community. If she was alive today, she would gladly volunteer to organize the church’s potluck suppers and trips in the country for senior citizens. But she did not have a living faith at the moment of crisis: *“If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died”* verse 21.

It is interesting to note that some of the Jews who had been ready to stone the Lord Jesus also said: *“Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?”* John 11:37. We can understand when a non-believer acts like a non-believer, but it is difficult to comprehend when a believer acts like a non-believer. Do you have an ‘if only’ in your life? You

## The Love of God

can see your way around the problem if circumstances had only been different, but you cannot comprehend the sufficiency of the risen Christ to meet you at the point of your greatest dilemma. The Lord Jesus had said to Martha: *“I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”* verse 25.

Jesus also indicated: *“Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?”* John 11:40. The question was not the resurrection of Lazarus, but **the glory of God.**

In this case, it was to the glory of God that Lazarus was raised from the dead. Later, it would be to the glory of God that Deacon Stephen was stoned to death. It was to the glory of God that the apostle Peter was released from prison, but it was also to the glory of God that the apostle Paul ended up in prison. The lame man who, *“they laid daily at the temple which is called Beautiful”* asked the disciples for alms and received legs! *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth”* he was commanded to *“rise up and walk.”* No longer lame, the beggar walked, leapt and praised God. Acts 3:2,6,8. However, in his physical afflictions, Paul said: *“I will rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me”* 2 Corinthians 12:9. The question is not life or death; prison or freedom;

## The Love of God

healing or sickness, it is the glory of God. Comfort and convenience are not the only demonstrations of the love of God.

**The City:** The Lord Jesus not only wept over the family but He also wept over the city, Jerusalem: *“He beheld the city, and wept over it” . . . “they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”* Luke 19:41,44.

When the Lord Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem, being God, Jesus knew of the tragic consequence of their unbelief which would cause the future desolation of the population, including the children, being slaughtered in A.D. 70 by the Roman army under Titus. Jesus lamented, *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”* Matthew 23:37.

Do you, do I, shed tears for the foreboding future of our own country which is enmeshed in sexual perversion, abortion slaughter, and political corruption? Do we view the dying souls of unknown people who live in despair in spiritual delusion, and in the threat of untimely death through the magnifying effect of the teardrops that splash from heaven? Such precious people cry out for a ray of

## The Love of God

God's love and truth. It is up to us to introduce them to the Lord Jesus who is the Resurrection and the Life. That is God's influential love working in and through us.

It is of great blessing for Dorothy and me, through CCIM, to reach out to such people around the world through the means of Internet, literature, and radio broadcasts of *The Way of Truth* and *Dorothy's Daily Devotionals*. Let us share with you one of the hundreds of communications we receive each month.

A pastor in Senegal, West Africa, regularly visits the Djourbel Prison, located 100 km from the capital city of Dakar. He gave *Your Quest for God* to a prisoner who was incarcerated for many years after attempting to escape from prison on two occasions. This prisoner used to be a ranking member of an extremist religious movement. He never cut his hair and belonged to 'Bayfal,' a people who dedicate their lives to religion and follow a guru. Isolated in his cell, he read our book and gave his life to Jesus.

This new believer then requested to have a haircut and wear new clothes. He now participates in the prison church as an active member. Seeing the transformation of his life, the prison guards also requested copies of *Your Quest for God*, and the Lord is doing great things among the prisoners and the guards in this Senegal prison! Praise the Lord for **His influential love!**



***My Prayerful Response:***

*“Lord Jesus, in glad response to Your overwhelming love, **for me; in me and through** me, and by Your enabling grace, I unreservedly yield my time and my energy to You.*

*Thank You for the men and women, boys and girls who are today spiritually dead but will find new life and love in You by the overflow of Your love through me!*

Now, for you to constantly appropriate and appreciate *The love of God* in your life, the **“Concluding Spiritual Check-up”** is a must!

Many of us consider it wise to have an occasional medical ‘check-up’. To do this we invest money and a little time. The correct diagnosis of any physical problem, and its subsequent treatments, will greatly depend on the initial questions the doctor asks. It is also wise for Christians to have an occasional spiritual ‘check-up.’ All that this requires is transparent honesty and the investment of time as we draw aside to be alone with God!

### *Concluding Spiritual Check-up*

*“With Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light we shall see light”* Psalm 36:9. Only in the transparent light of the eternal God do we see ourselves as we really are. David knew this. He wrote, *“O Lord Thou hast searched me and known me”* Psalm 139:1. He then concluded: *“Search me O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”* verses 23, 24. In other words David prayed, ‘Lord, introduce me to myself. I want to see the need of my heart as You see my real need.’

The church at Corinth criticized the apostle Paul but failed to examine themselves. Paul wrote to them: *“Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith, prove yourselves. Know ye not yourselves how Jesus Christ is in you unless you are discredited”* 2 Corinthians 13:5 NSRB.

In the momentous days of revival, when England was delivered from the bloodshed of the French Revolution, sparks of revival were fanned by the Holy Spirit into multiple fellowships which became churches across the British Isles. John Wesley wrote the following guidelines to such fellowships. Why not spend time with God in answering these questions yourself?

## The Love of God

- When did I last speak to somebody else with the object to try to win that person for Christ?
- Was the Bible living to me today?
- Do I give the Bible time to speak to me every day?
- Am I enjoying prayer?
- Am I proud?
- Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am a better person than I really am?  
In other words, am I a hypocrite?
- Am I honest in all my acts or words, or do I exaggerate?
- Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
- Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
- Am I a slave to friends, to dress, to work or to habits?
- Am I self-conscious, self-pitying or self-justifying?
- Do I really pray about the money I spend?
- How do I spend my spare time?
- Do I grumble or complain constantly?

## The Love of God

- Is there anybody whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I going to do about it?
- Am I defeated in any part of my life?
- Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
- Is Christ a living reality in my life?

Little wonder that speaking of those revival days, John Wesley wrote: “God has visited His people with a new baptism of love!”

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven, to earth come down;  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling;  
All Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus Thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation;  
Enter every trembling heart.

~ Charles Wesley, 1707-1788.

## *Irresistible Love*

*“For the love of Christ constraineth us”*

2 Corinthians 5:14

I trust you have been blessed with the various messages on *“The Love of God.”* Now, in conclusion, let us consider a few thoughts on, *“Irresistible Love.”*

Every day you and I mingle with people who are physically alive; emotionally alive; intellectually alive but spiritually dead. In conversation with these people it is easy to comfortably relate to their physical, their emotional and their intellectual areas of common interest.

But it is only the compassion of the love of Christ that will break through the conversation to their all-important spiritual needs and eternal destiny.

“That is not my gift nor my calling,” you may say. However, we can confess Christ with our life and we can confess Christ with our lips. It is equally important to know that we can deny Christ by our speech and we can deny Christ by our silence. However, the Lord did not address a church or an evangelist when He said, *“You shall be witnesses unto Me”* Acts 1:8.

Every one of us have our own special mission field. There is the bank teller, the hair dresser, the neighbor or the person sitting with us in the doctor’s office - the list goes on and on. In each and every one of these circumstances,

## The Love of God

Dorothy and I have had the privilege of leading people to Christ.

However, I personally look back with shame at my silent lips when I missed golden opportunities. It was after Dorothy was confined to a darkened room for nearly 12 months, because of her chronic Myasthenia Gravis, that I was delighted when she was able again to accompany me on a ministry mission.

We were to be at the 'Word of Life Bible Conference' in the Adirondacks. To get there we had to fly from San Diego. At a stopover in Chicago, Dorothy collapsed on the floor after stepping off the plane into heat and humidity. A kindly hostess came to my side and knelt with me and asked what she could do. As we talked together she said, "What star were you born under?" I replied, "I don't believe in that. Why do you ask?" "Because I wanted to find out why you are so kind."

At that point, I had a wonderful opportunity to witness for Christ and share my testimony, but I blew it! The irony was, that at the Word of Life Conference, my schedule was to minister on 'Personal Evangelism.' What a hypocrite! How could I start? Instead of giving some glowing testimonies of people who have come to Christ through our witness, I introduced my theme by sharing when God gave me a wonderful opportunity to witness for Christ, at Chicago airport and how my lips remained silent. More people seemed to respond to my 'failure' than to all my subsequent reports of successful witnessing.

How I wish that these people could have heard the end of the story. Before returning to the West Coast, we had to

## The Love of God

go through Philadelphia airport. There, to our delight, we again met the same hostess who we met on the outward journey. "Please forgive me," I said. "Whatever for?" she enquired. "Any love you may have seen was not because of the star I was born under, nor of my own affection, but it was the love of the Lord Jesus Who lives in me, and I should have explained that to you."

This testimony resulted in the hostess asking if she could sit with us in her 'off time.' It was then we explained how much God loved her and how she could respond to His love. As we prayed together, tears streamed down her face in response to His love.

On two occasions, Dorothy and I were requested to attend the Presidential Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC. Seated at the main event, the MC asked us to introduce ourselves and our mission to the other guests seated at the table. "I am the US Ambassador from Israel," said one. "I am the US Ambassador from Romania," said another. "I am a member of Parliament from Canada," said two others as they introduced their wives. Then came Dorothy's turn. I held my breath.

In a clear voice, she said, "I too am an Ambassador; I am an Ambassador for my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!" I was next. What could I say? I acted like Barak of old who hid behind the skirts of Deborah and became strategically involved in her victory. So I proudly identified myself with Dorothy and her mission!

It is never inopportune to witness for Christ. "*Be instant in season, out of season.*" 2 Timothy 4:2. If it is 'in season,' take the opportunity, if it is 'out of season,' make

## The Love of God

the opportunity. But never keep silent in your witness for Christ.

When God's love overflows from your heart, you will not witness because you have to, but because it is as natural as breathing. Yes, "*The Irresistible Love*" of God is the dynamic of soul-winning!

Give me a passion for souls, dear Lord:  
A passion to save the lost;  
O that Thy love were by all adored  
And welcomed at any cost.

Jesus I long, I long to be winning  
Men who are lost and constantly sinning;  
O may this hour be one of beginning.  
The wonderful story to tell!

Henry G. Tovey





## *Greater than human love!*

Just as a ray of light enters a glass prism and emerges in all the beautiful hues of the rainbow, so love enters the mind of Paul's illuminated intelligence and emerges in the glorious spectrum of the fruit of *The Love of God*.

Other books by Dr. Richard A. Bennett:

*"Your Quest for God"* is much sought after in multiple languages both for personal help and as a tool for personal witness.

*"Food for Faith"* It is possible to study many recipes and yet remain hungry. "Food for Faith" will encourage you to appreciate God's Word; to appropriate God's Word and to assimilate God's Word. Only in this way will your spiritual appetite be nourished.

"All rights reserved" with permission to download and freely circulate as maintaining the name, organization and address of the author. You can freely download at:

[www.ccim-media.com](http://www.ccim-media.com).

©Cross Currents International Ministries