

THE LOVE OF GOD

This coming Thursday being Valentine's Day, the thoughts of many are on love. We certainly need more love in this world. Of course not everything that is called "love" is truly love, but often no more than vain, selfish desire. The words, "I love you" may be uttered, but sometimes it is without evidence. All forms of true love need to be seen, not just in words, but also in deeds.

God has not only told us repeatedly in the Bible of His love for us, but has proven that love by His actions. John 3:16 has been often referred to as "the little Bible" inasmuch as it is the heart of the Bible message: *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Somebody once commented that it was as if someone should ask Jesus, "How much do you love me?" and Jesus stretched out His arms as far as He could reach. He then said, "This much," and He died. Friends, He stretched out His arms on the cross for us, for without His death on our behalf we could not be saved. If we could be saved by our own merit, Jesus would never have had to come, and He never would have had to die.

Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? Do you believe He is the Christ, (God's anointed), the Son of God who died for our sins, was buried and rose again, now abiding at the right hand of the Father in Heaven, awaiting His return to claim His people? Can you also say with John, "We love Him because He first loved us"? As God demonstrated His love for us in giving us His Son as the offering for our sins, He asks of us the surrender of our hearts and lives to Him. He not only claimed to love us, but showed that love at Calvary. Is it expecting too much for Him to ask commitment and obedience from us? Believing the gospel (good news) of what He has done for you, have you yet committed your life to Him in repentance and baptism? (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). We have nothing of value to offer the Lord but our hearts. Even as baptized believers, may we heed the admonition of James: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5).

When the Lord returns, may we not be found guilty of spurning His love, but be seen as those who have loved Him in return.

-Ron