

## Doctrine of the Love of God

1. The love of God for the following is declared in *Scripture*.

- God loved the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- God loved Israel as a nation
- God loved Solomon
- God loved the Messiah
- God the Son loved the Rich Young Ruler
- God loved the world of the lost
- God loved Martha and her sister and their brother Lazarus
- God the Son loved the disciples
- God the Son loved John
- God the Son loved the church
- God the Son loves each and every believer personally

2. When addressing the Exodus generation Moses mentions the love of God having in mind Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- *Deuteronomy 4:37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;*

*“The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
It goes beyond the highest star,  
And reaches to the lowest hell;  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,  
God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled,  
And pardoned from his sin.”*

3. The love of God for the Exodus generation moved Him to deliver the Hebrews from the land of bondage in Egypt.

- *Deuteronomy 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

*“O love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure  
The saints’ and angels’ song.”*

4. Because God loved Israel He would not allow Balaam to curse them. When the greedy prophet opened His mouth to curse the nation the Lord caused his tongue to speak words of blessing.

- *Deuteronomy 23:5 Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.*

*“When years of time shall pass away,  
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,  
When men, who here refuse to pray,  
On rocks and hills and mountains call,  
God’s love so sure, shall still endure,  
All measureless and strong;  
Redeeming grace to Adam ’s race—  
The saints’ and angels’ song.”*

5. The love of God was recognized by the nation and compelled them to sit at His feet in reverence and respect. The people of God are kept upon His heart and in His hands.

- *Deuteronomy 33:3 Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.*

*“Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God above,  
Would drain the ocean dry.  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky.”*

6. Others recognized the love of God for Solomon and for the people of Israel.

- *1 Kings 10:9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.*
- *1 Chronicles 2:11 Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.*
- *2 Chronicles 9:8 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee his throne, to be king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.*

7. The special love of God for Jacob was recognized and recorded. When God first came to Jacob he had just stolen the blessing from his brother Esau by deceiving their father. Such is the nature of grace. Jacob was running away to Haran when he met the Lord.

- *Psalms 47:4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.*

*“Lovingly the Shepherd, Seeking the lost sheep,  
Found it tired and hungry On the mountain steep.  
Jesus paid the price, great the pain and loss;  
To redeem the world, at great pain and loss.  
To redeem the world, to redeem the world,  
Jesus Christ laid down His life upon the cross.*

*Precious is the lost coin, Sought with love and care,  
And with joy the owner Found her treasure rare.*

*Tenderly the Father  
Welcomes home His son;  
Though once dead he liveth,  
Love at last has won.”*

8. The love of God for a geographical location is also recognized.

- *Psalms 78:68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.*

9. Because God loved His people and found them precious in His sight He moved to deliver them from their captors.

- *Isaiah 43:4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.*
- *Isaiah 48:14 All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.*

*“Loving Savior, hear my cry,  
Hear my cry, hear my cry;  
Trembling to Thy arms I fly,  
Oh, save me at the cross.*

*I have sinned, but Thou hast died,  
Thou hast died, Thou hast died;  
In Thy mercy let me hide,  
Oh, save me at the cross.*

*Lord Jesus, receive me,  
No more would I grieve Thee;  
Now, blessèd Redeemer,  
Oh, save me at the cross.*

*Though I perish I will pray,  
I will pray, I will pray;  
Thou of life the Living Way,  
Oh, save me at the cross.*

*Thou hast said Thy grace is free,  
Grace is free, grace is free;  
Have compassion, Lord, on me,  
Oh, save me at the cross.*

*Wash me in Thy cleansing blood,  
Cleansing blood, cleansing blood;  
Plunge me now beneath the flood,  
Oh, save me at the cross.*

*Only faith will pardon bring,  
Pardon bring, pardon bring,  
In that faith to Thee I cling,  
Oh, save me at the cross.”*

Fanny Crosby

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10. The love of God is not based on time or human merit but on the eternal decree of God.

- *Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Loved with everlasting love, led by grace that love to know; Gracious Spirit from above, Thou hast taught me it is so! O this full and perfect peace! O this transport all divine! In a love which cannot cease, I am His, and He is mine. In a love which cannot cease, I am His, and He is mine.*

*“Heav ’n above is softer blue, Earth around is sweeter green!  
Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen;  
Birds with gladder songs o ’erflow, flowers with deeper beauties shine,  
Since I know, as I now know, I am His, and He is mine.  
Since I know, as I now know, I am His, and He is mine.*

*Things that once were wild alarms cannot now disturb my rest;  
Closed in everlasting arms, pillowed on the loving breast.*

*O to lie forever here, doubt and care and self resign,  
While He whispers in my ear, I am His, and He is mine.  
While He whispers in my ear, I am His, and He is mine.*

*His forever, only His; Who the Lord and me shall part?  
Ah, with what a rest of bliss Christ can fill the loving heart!  
Heav’n and earth may fade and flee, firstborn light in gloom decline;  
But while God and I shall be, I am His, and He is mine.  
But while God and I shall be, I am His, and He is mine.”*

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11. The OT prophets anticipated the love of God for the Messiah.

- *Hosea 11: 1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.*

12. Though the love of God can be doubted and questioned it cannot be denied.

- *Malachi 1: 2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob 's brother? Saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,*

*“I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,  
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more,  
But the Master of the sea, heard my despairing cry,  
From the waters lifted me, now safe am I.  
Love lifted me! Love lifted me!  
When nothing else could help  
Love lifted me!*

*All my heart to Him I give, ever to Him I'll cling  
In His blessed presence live, ever His praises sing,  
Love so mighty and so true, merits my soul's best songs,  
Faithful, loving service too, to Him belongs.  
Souls in danger look above, Jesus completely saves,  
He will lift you by His love, out of the angry waves.  
He's the Master of the sea, billows His will obey,  
He your Savior wants to be, be saved today.”*

James Rowe

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13. As the love of God can be doubted it can also be rejected. Though Jesus loved the Rich Young Ruler the Lord let him walk away after calling him to service and thus salvation.

- *Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

14. The love of God is the great and the grandest theme of the Bible. All of the theology of the Scripture is summarized in the single verse of John 3:16.

- *John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

*“Of the themes that men have known,  
One supremely stands alone;  
Through the ages it has shown,  
'Tis His wonderful, wonderful love.*

*Love is the theme, love is supreme;  
Sweeter it grows, glory bestows;  
Bright as the sun ever it glows!  
Love is the theme, eternal theme!*

*Let the bells of heaven ring,  
Let the saints their tribute bring,  
Let the world true praises sing  
For His wonderful, wonderful love.*

*Since the Lord my soul unbound,  
I am telling all around  
Pardon, peace and joy are found  
In His wonderful, wonderful love.  
As of old when blind and lame  
To the blessed Master came,  
Sinners, call upon His Name,  
Trust His wonderful, wonderful love.”*

Albert C. Fisher

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15. Love found a way to help the family of Mary and Martha and Lazarus in the hour of their greatest need.

- *John 11: 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. John 11: the Jews, Behold how he loved him!*

*“Wonderful love that rescued me, sunk deep in sin,  
Guilty and vile as I could be—no hope within;  
When every ray of light had fled, O glorious day!  
Raising my soul from out the dead, love found a way.  
Love found a way, to redeem my soul,  
Love found a way, that could make me whole.  
Love sent my Lord to the cross of shame,  
Love found a way, O praise His holy Name!  
Love brought my Savior here to die on Calvary,  
For such a sinful wretch as I, how can it be?  
Love bridged the gulf ’twixt me and Heav’n, taught me to pray,  
I am redeemed, set free, forgiv’n, love found a way.  
Love opened wide the gates of light to Heav’n’s domain,  
Where in eternal power and might Jesus shall reign.  
Love lifted me from depths of woe to endless day,  
There was no help in earth below; love found a way.”*

Avis M. Christiansen

16. There was a unique love relationship Christ had with the disciples in general and John in particular.

- *John 13:1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*
- *John 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.*

17. The love of Christ was displayed as an example of how Christians are to love one another.

- *John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*
- *Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

*“We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord:  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.*

*And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love,  
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.*

*We will walk with each other,  
we will walk hand in hand.  
We will walk with each other,  
we will walk hand in hand.*

*And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.*

*And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love,  
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love.*

*We will work with each other, we will work side by side.  
We will work with each other, we will work side by side.  
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride.*

*And they'll know we are Christians  
By our love, by our love,  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.”*

18. One way a person can know if God the Father and God the Son is loved is through gospel obedience. God will test the heart in this matter. Temptation is a test to see if the heart loves God. If the times of testing are understood in this manner it can help the heart resist evil.

- *Deuteronomy 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.*
- *John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

“When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,  
 What a glory He sheds on our way!  
 While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
 And with all who will trust and obey.  
 Trust and obey, for there’s no other way  
 To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.  
 Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
 But His smile quickly drives it away;  
 Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,  
 Can abide while we trust and obey.  
 Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,  
 But our toil He doth richly repay;  
 Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,  
 But is blessed if we trust and obey.  
 But we never can prove the delights of His love  
 Until all on the altar we lay;  
 For the favor He shows, for the joy He bestows,  
 Are for them who will trust and obey.  
 Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet.  
 Or we’ll walk by His side in the way.  
 What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;  
 Never fear, only trust and obey.”

John H. Sammis, 1887

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19. A second way to demonstrate love for God the Father and God the Son is by rejoicing in the will of the Lord.

- *John 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

Adelaide Pollard believed the Lord wanted her in Africa as a missionary, but she was unable to raise funds to go. In an uncertain state of mind, she attended a prayer meeting, where she heard an elderly woman pray, “*It’s all right, Lord. It doesn’t matter what You bring into our lives, just have Your own way with us.*” At home that night, much encouraged, she wrote this hymn.

*“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
 Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.  
 Mold me and make me after Thy will,  
 While I am waiting, yielded and still.  
 Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
 Search me and try me, Master, today!  
 Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,  
 As in Thy presence humbly I bow.  
 Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
 Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!  
 Power, all power, surely is Thine!  
 Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.  
 Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
 Hold o’er my being absolute sway!  
 Fill with Thy Spirit ’till all shall see  
 Christ only, always, living in me.”*

Adelaide A. Pollard  
 1907  
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20. The love of Christ is designed to sustain the believer during the great trials of life, including temptation. The believer in turn must continue in the love of Christ by extending it to others.

- *John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

21. It is not just a nice idea or an arbitrary decision for believers to love one another, it is a royal command.

- *John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. x I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

22. The love of God for individuals is enhanced when Jesus is loved and believed in.

- *John 16:27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.*

*“There is a Name I love to hear,  
 I love to sing its worth;  
 It sounds like music in my ear,  
 The sweetest Name on earth.  
 O how I love Jesus,  
 O how I love Jesus,  
 O how I love Jesus,  
 Because He first loved me!  
 It tells me of a Savior’s love,  
 Who died to set me free;  
 It tells me of His precious blood,  
 The sinner’s perfect plea.*

*It tells me of a Father's smile  
 Beaming upon His child;  
 It cheers me through this little while,  
 Through desert, waste, and wild.  
 It tells me what my Father hath  
 In store for every day,  
 And though I tread a darksome path,  
 Yields sunshine all the way.  
 It tells of One whose loving heart  
 Can feel my deepest woe;  
 Who in each sorrow bears  
 A part that none can bear below.  
 It bids my trembling heart rejoice.  
 It dries each rising tear.  
 It tells me, in a "still small voice,"  
 To trust and never fear.  
 Jesus, the Name I love so well,  
 The Name I love to hear:  
 No saint on earth its worth can tell,  
 No heart conceive how dear.  
 This Name shall shed its fragrance still  
 Along this thorny road,  
 Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill  
 That leads me up to God.  
 And there with all the blood-bought throng,  
 From sin and sorrow free,  
 I'll sing the new eternal song  
 Of Jesus' love for me."*

Frederick Whitfield, 1855

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23. The love of God is designed to be known by the world and to bring the heart of the believer to perfection or spiritual maturity.

- *John 1 7:23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

24. Christ taught the love of God to the disciples.

- *John 1 7:26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

25. The lessons of love were learned for the disciples knew Jesus loved them.

- *John 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!*

*“Jesus loves me! This I know,  
 For the Bible tells me so.  
 Little ones to Him belong;  
 They are weak, but He is strong.  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.  
 Jesus loves me! This I know,  
 As He loved so long ago,  
 Taking children on His knee,  
 Saying, “Let them come to Me.”  
 Jesus loves me still today,  
 Walking with me on my way,  
 Wanting as a friend to give Light and love to all who live.  
 Jesus loves me!  
 He who died Heaven’s gate to open wide;  
 He will wash away my sin, Let His little child come in.  
 Jesus loves me!  
 He will stay Close beside me all the way;  
 Thou hast bled and died for me,  
 I will henceforth live for Thee.”*  
 Anna Warner  
 Stanzas 2-3, David Rutherford McGuire.  
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The words to this song originally appeared as a poem inside a novel, *Say and Seal*, which Anna Warner co-authored with her sister Susan. In the book, the words are spoken to a dying child, and in that context, there is another stanza not commonly found in hymnals: “Jesus loves me! Loves me still, Though I’m very weak and ill, That I might from sin be free Bled and died upon the tree.”

26. The Christian conquers sin and death through Christ who loved us.

- *Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

27. The love of God is not only general it is specific.

- *Romans 9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*
- *John 20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*
- *John 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.*
- *John 21:20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*

*“Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly,  
 While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.  
 Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past;  
 Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last.  
 Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee;  
 Leave, ah! Leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.  
 All my trust on Thee is stayed, all my help from Thee I bring;  
 Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy wing.  
 Wilt Thou not regard my call? Wilt Thou not accept my prayer?  
 Lo! I sink, I faint, I fall—Lo! on Thee I cast my care;  
 Reach me out Thy gracious hand! While I of Thy strength receive,  
 Hoping against hope I stand, dying, and behold, I live.  
 Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I find;  
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
 Just and holy is Thy Name, I am all unrighteousness;  
 False and full of sin I am; Thou art full of truth and grace.  
 Plenteous grace with Thee is found, grace to cover all my sin;  
 Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.  
 Thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of Thee;  
 Spring Thou up within my heart; rise to all eternity.”*

Charles Wesley

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As the death of Christ demonstrates His love for individuals so the professing dies to self in order to live for Christ. What Jesus did on behalf of His own must be constantly upon the heart.

- *Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

*“Walked Christ my Savior, weary and worn;  
 Facing for sinners death on the cross,  
 That He might save them from endless loss.  
 Blessèd Redeemer! Precious Redeemer!  
 Seems now I see Him on Calvary’s tree;  
 Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading,  
 Blind and unheeding—dying for me!  
 “Father forgive them!” thus did He pray,  
 E’en while His lifeblood flowed fast away;  
 Praying for sinners while in such woe  
 No one but Jesus ever loved so.  
 O how I love Him, Savior and Friend,  
 How can my praises ever find end!  
 Through years unnumbered on Heaven’s shore,  
 My tongue shall praise Him forevermore.”*

Avis M. Christiansen, 1920

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28. The mercy of God is rich for His love is great, greater than all our sins.

- *Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

*“Glory be to Jesus,  
Who, in bitter pains,  
Poured for me the lifeblood  
From His sacred veins!  
Grace and life eternal  
In that blood I find;  
Blest be His compassion,  
Infinitely kind.  
Blest through endless ages  
Be the precious stream  
Which from endless torments  
Doth the world redeem.  
Abel’s blood for vengeance  
Pleaded to the skies;  
But the blood of Jesus  
For our pardon cries.  
Oft as it is sprinkled On our guilty hearts,  
Satan in confusion Terror struck departs.  
Oft as earth exulting Wafts its praise on high,  
Angel hosts, rejoicing, Make their glad reply.  
Lift we then our voices, Swell the mighty flood;  
Louder still and louder Praise the precious blood!”*

S. Alfonso, 18th Century

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29. The life of the believer is to be characterized by consistency in love. The believer must do the most loving act in every situation.

- *Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.*

*“We are traveling on with our staff in hand,  
Walking in the good old way;  
We are pilgrims bound for the heavenly land,  
Walking in the good old way.  
Walking in the blessedness of love untold,  
Traveling to a country that will ne ’er grow old,  
Jesus our Redeemer we shall there behold,  
Home in the realms of day.  
We are traveling on through a world of sin,  
Walking in the good old way;  
Though our foes are strong we have peace within,  
Walking in the good old way.*

*We are traveling on in the Master's Name,  
Walking in the good old way;  
And we sing His praise with a loud acclaim,  
Walking in the good old way.  
We are traveling on to the rolling tide,  
Walking in the good old way;  
But we trust in Him who is still our Guide,  
Walking in the good old way."*

Fanny J. Crosby

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30. When Christian husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church they display for the world a word of testimony.

- *Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

31. From the love of God the Father comes everlasting consolation and good hope through grace of life with out end and home in heaven.

- *2 Thessalonians 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,*

32. The loved of God is specifically demonstrated by the death of Christ to be a propitiation for a satisfaction for our sins.

- *1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

33. Had God not first loved there could be no redemption and no hope of restoration to fellowship and service. There could have been no response to love. Now there is.

- *1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*

34. Because Nazareth means "lily," the new Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth has a steeple that resembles a lily. But it is an upside-down lily; its open mouth is pointing downward to suggest God's pouring out of himself to man. That is exactly what happened when Christ came.

*"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;  
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.  
I love Thee because Thou has first loved me,  
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.*

*I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.  
I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,  
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;  
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow,  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.  
In mansions of glory and endless delight,  
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;  
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow;  
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."*

William Featherston, 1864  
Mr. Featherston was only 16 years old at the time

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35. Not only is the love of God historic and eternal it is a present reality.

- *Revelation 1: 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved [loves] us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*

### **The Love of God**

Dr. T.T. Shields was the pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church in Toronto, Canada. He tells this wonderful story illustrating the love of God. In the home of a friend one day, as he reclined on the lounge opposite, and I in an easy chair, we were having a pleasant chat until dinner was called, when his little boy, named Neil, about three or four years old, came in. He went to his father's side and I heard him whisper, "*Papa, get up and show Mr. Shields how much you love*

*me." I knew at once there was a secret between them, as it is fitting there should be between father and child, and that was a secret in which the child rejoiced. His father smiled, and said, "Oh, run away, Neil, and play; we are busy talking, and Mr. Shields knows I love you." "Yes," said the little fellow "but I want you to show him how much."*

Again and again the father tried to put him off, but the child persisted in his plea that the visitor be shown "*how much*" the father loved. At length the father yielded, and as he stood, the child stood between us, and holding up his index finger, with a glance first at his father and then at me, he said, "*Now you watch, till you see how much my papa loves me.*" His father was a tall and splendidly proportioned man. First, he partially extended one arm, but the child exclaimed, "*No, more than that.*"

The other arm was extended, but the little fellow was not content, and demanded, "*More than that.*" Then one after the other both arms were outstretched to the full, only the fingers remaining closed. But still the child insisted, "*More than that.*" Then--in response to his repeated demands, as he playfully stamped his little foot and clapped his hands and cried, "*No! No! It's more than that!*"--one finger after another on either hand was extended, until his father's arms were opened to their utmost reach, and to each was added the full hand breadth. Then the child turned to me, and gleefully clapping his hands, exclaimed, "*See? That's how much papa loves me.*" Then he ran off to his play content. I charge thee, sinner, let not thine unbelief drive thee beyond the far reach of mercy's fingertips! There is no country this side of hell which is not shadowed by that Cross. Behold, and believe how much God loves thee! 36. Revelation 3:9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

*"I heard an old, old story,  
How a Saviour came from glory,  
How He gave His life on Calvary  
to save a wretch like me;  
I heard about His groaning,  
of His precious blood's atoning,  
Then I repented of my sins  
and won the victory."*

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