

*From the Bits and Pieces series (#513) by Elder Ralph Harris*

## THE DURATION OF GOD'S LOVE

One of the ways in which the greatness of God's love for His people may be seen is in its *duration*. It is an "*everlasting love*" (Jeremiah. 31:3). It is a love that cannot be destroyed. God's love, as an eternal attribute of His, cannot vacillate or falter, increase or decrease. No contingency can arise that can in any way frustrate it or create even a temporary cessation of it. In this sense, nothing the objects of His love may do can cause Him to cease loving them. Paul makes it so very clear in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Roman brethren that there is *absolutely nothing* that can separate the elect from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans. 8:31-39). They may so behave at times as to lose a *felt sense* of His love, and thus may not abide experientially in His love (see John 15:10), but this in no way alters the fact that His love for them is immutably fixed, from everlasting to everlasting. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

How sad is that doctrine, and how miserable must be its advocates, which says that God may love us today and hate us tomorrow! How dreadful would be the thought that we might get ourselves *into* the love of God by our *good* works and then get ourselves *out* of His love by our *bad* ones. With regard to such a distressing notion David asks, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psalm 130:3). The answer of course is, "None." Under such a strict arrangement, all humanity would inevitably be lost and ruined. If we had to either stand or fall before the final judgment bar of God on the basis of our works, none of us could stand. Those who think otherwise simply do not know how frail they are (Psalm 39:4), nor do they understand what the law of God demands; "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Neither do they know how, and by whom, those demands are, and were, met (see Rom. 8:1-4). How thankful we ought to be that God is eternal, and that so is His love for His people!

When once we understand that salvation (everything necessary to assure the final glorification of the saints) rests alone in the grace and mercy of God, and that our only claim to any favor whatsoever from Him resides solely in the shed blood and imputed righteousness of Christ, then we will see why John displayed such wonder and amazement when he said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (I John 3:1).

What manner of love indeed! And, "beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11), and "walk in love, as Christ hath loved us," etc. (Eph. 5:2). If our beloved Saviour, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, could stoop so low as to take such wretched sinners as are we into His loving embrace, is it a great thing that we should love our brethren? Help us, Lord, to be more like thee! ---Elder  
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