

FORGOTTEN ATTRIBUTES OF GOD'S LOVE

by Elder Bob Allgood

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten ---" Rev. 3:19

The AMEN, the faithful and true witness of God, our Lord Jesus Christ told John the beloved to write to the Laodiceans a very sad commentary concerning the spiritual condition of that church. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev 3:14-17). There is not a compliment to be found coming from the lips of our Lord concerning this church. That by itself disproves the vain philosophy of man that says "If you can't say

something good about someone, don't say anything at all". Obviously Jesus did not believe this, for he said, "As many as I love, I rebuke --".

"As Many As --" quantifies to whom this is written. Jesus was not standing at the heart's door of every dead alien sinner, knocking and pleading for the sinner to let him come in (Rev 3:20). This letter was written to born again believers, baptized into a church, who became so indifferent to the way of truth, that they were lukewarm and sickening in the sight of Jesus Christ. The Son of God gives eternal life to AS MANY AS the Father gives him (John 17:2). The promise of eternal life is to AS MANY AS the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:39). AS MAN AS were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13:48), and AS MANY AS are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom 8:14). For AS MANY AS God loves, he rebukes and chastens (Heb 12:5-8, Rev 3:19).

For those who have a spurious concept of love, these may indeed be strange sounding words. Many today think of love as sweet honey dripping from both sides of the mouth, tolerating all things and forgiveness without any demand for repentance. This is not the love of God, for Jesus said "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent". We are told by our Saviour, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another". Our love can never equal the love of God. At the very best, our love can only manifest a small portion of the attributes of His love.

God's love has several attributes. His love is IMMEASURABLE (Eph 3:14-19). His Love is FREELY BESTOWED (Deut 7:6-9, I John 3:1 and 4:10-11). His love is EVERLASTING (Jer. 31:3, Rom. 8:31-39). Love is LONGSUFFERING and KIND, ETC. (I Cor 13); love is GIVING (John 3:16, 15:13, 10:14-18, I John 4:9). While most like to dwell on these attributes we often forget that His love is DEMANDING (John 13:34-35, 14:15, 15:9-12) and HATES INIQUITY (Ps. 5:4- 5, Heb. 1:8-9, I Cor 13:4-7); therefore His love REBUKES and DISCIPLINES. These attributes (I am sure there are

others) are ALL INGREDIENTS OF GODLY LOVE -- to leave one out will result in something less than LOVE.

Man in his natural state confuses LUST with LOVE. Most "sexual sins" are referred to as MAKING LOVE. God's people are told to "Love not the world - For all that is in the world, the LUST of the flesh, and the LUST of the eyes - is not of the Father -" (I John 2:15-16). The WORKS or LUST of the flesh are listed in Gal. 5:16-21. While man has given SOPHISTICATED names to them: Adultery = Extra Marital Affairs or Flings; Fornication = Sowing Wild Oats; Drunkenness = Disease of Alcoholism; Idolatry = Religious Preference; Heresies = Different Understanding of the Scriptures; God says "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God".

True love does not tolerate all things, agree with everything and oppose nothing. That is a spurious concept of Godly love. John the Baptist was "great in the sight of the Lord" and there was none greater in the kingdom of God, except for the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:13-15, Matt 11:11). John the Baptist opposed iniquity (Matt 3:3, 14:3-12). Paul, who wrote I Corinthians 13 also wrote extensively opposing sin and departure from the truth (Cf Gal. 1:6-9, Titus 1:10-16). Peter, who said "Thou knowest I love thee" to Jesus Christ, wrote some very strong words about False Prophets (I Peter 2). This is not to mention James (4:1-10) or John, the love apostle (I John 2:21-23) or Jude.

It is not a matter of one sin being greater or lesser in comparison with another sin. The love of God demands that we abstain from all of them in order to "inherit the kingdom of God". I believe the kingdom of God under consideration is the "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:16-19). Peace in the church of God comes when God's people are manifesting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-26), "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men".

The true measure of our love for Christ is that we keep his commandments, (John 14:15). John said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). True love is immeasurable, freely bestowed, everlasting, kind, gentle and giving. But true love is also demanding. True love hates iniquity, rebukes and disciplines. Jesus said, For "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten".