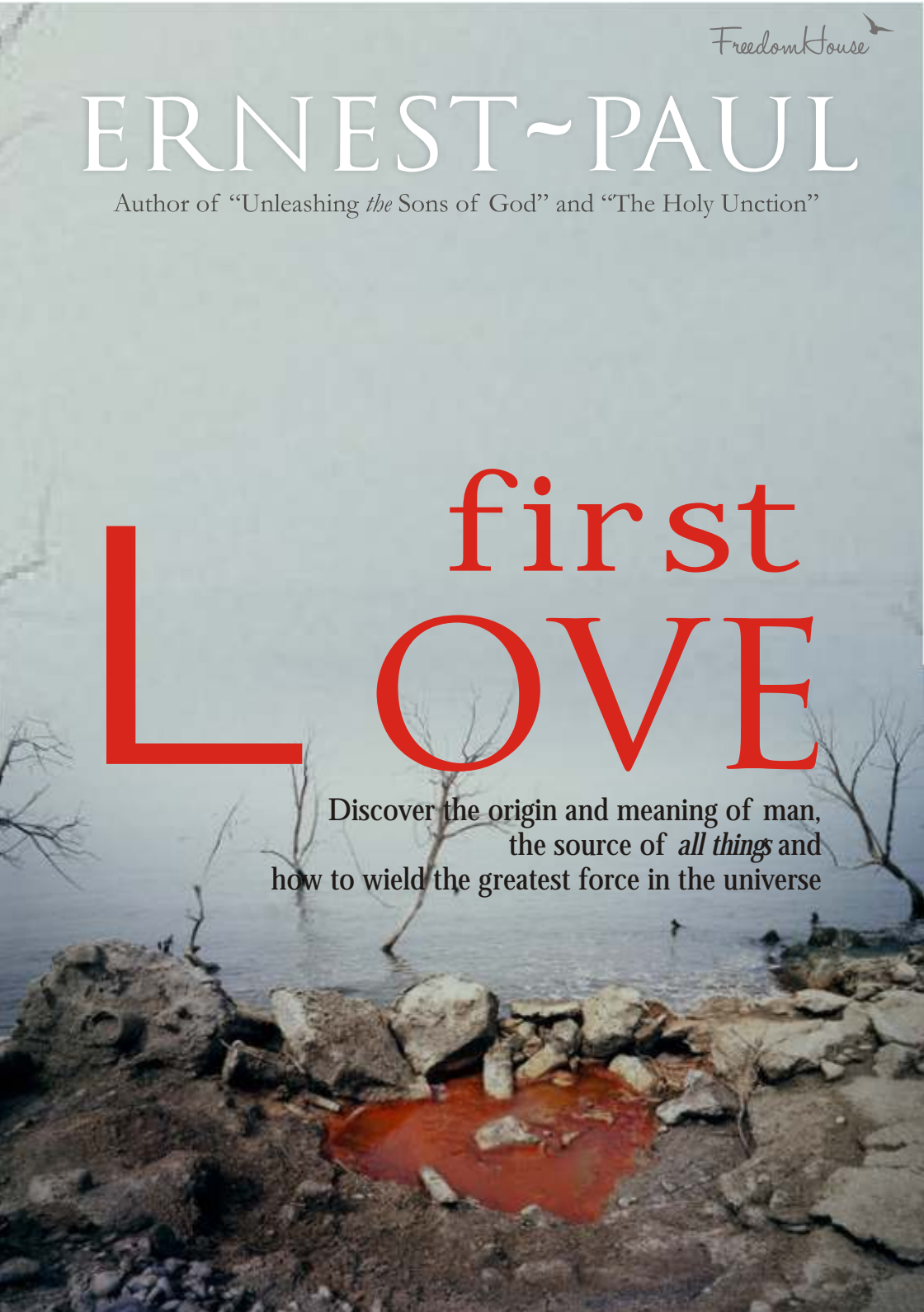


ERNEST~PAUL

Author of “Unleashing *the* Sons of God” and “The Holy Unction”

L first LOVE

Discover the origin and meaning of man,
the source of *all things* and
how to wield the greatest force in the universe



first
LOVE

ERNEST~PAUL

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1 CHAPTER ONE

What is Man?

Job 7:17 ¶ *What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?*

Ps 8:4 *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

Ps 144:3 **LORD**, *what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!*

The identity of man has forever stood at the centre of a global (even cosmic) conspiracy. Angels must wonder with admiration what man is that the eternal purposes of God are, it seems, centered in his race. Though of a weaker constitution than they, man occupies a place in divine interest much too difficult to understand without an unveiling of the deep and hidden counsels of God. Devils wonder with envy about the favor man has found with the Omnipotent One.

In the heat of his calamities Job laments, “What is man that you should magnify him?” Job cannot fathom the place that God has given to this creature called man. Looking within himself he cannot find the thing that commands God's affection. King David, the man after God's heart, echoes this same concern several centuries later. In David's case he says to God, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him?”

Philosophers throughout the ages have mused and quizzed as they have sought to unravel the mystery of man's identity. Jacob Behmen prayed earnestly, “O great and holy God, I pray thee, set open my inwardness to me; that I may rightly know what I am; and open in me what was shut up in Adam.”

Voltaire said: man has been able to measure the distance of the

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stars, and yet himself he has not come to know. The problems that concern a man the most have been left unanswered. He has not been able to find the reason for his own existence, and until he knows the reason for his own existence he cannot know the purpose or meaning of life.”

The inability of the human race to perceive the true meaning of man poses the first obstacle that renders it impossible for us to understand what God demands of man and the nature of man's offering. In searching for the true meaning of man he must travel to his origin, wading his way through paths cluttered with various and conflicting learning, thoughts, emotions, ideas, speculations and lies. To know himself man must seek out his true ancestry; and to do this he must delve into anthropology of all sorts. This seems the logical path to take and still men who have used this approach have failed to reach this end of ascertaining the meaning of man. We shall see later on why the anthropologists of the world have failed to deliver the golden answer.

Right now, we will embark on a journey; a journey right back through time until we burst out at eternity. Our quest is to discover the origin of man. Where did man come from? If the saying holds good, 'a chip off the old block', then we must find the old block. You may say, "I know; man was fashioned in the image of God. God is his father", and in saying this you would be correct but would that have answered the question that lurks deep within every human spirit even yours? Has that knowledge brought you into living in divine consciousness? Has it brought you into the end of your quest for deeper meaning? What we seek then is understanding and not mere letters.

If the origin of man is to be discovered, with a view to learning what man is, our exploration must lead us into the dreary regions of God's nakedness, to the place of divine vulnerability. The question 'what is man?' is directly linked to the question of what or who God is. The Bible teaches that God is spirit and that He dwells in unapproachable light. This gives us our first clue. We must in our quest venture into unapproachable light. Finding God is the key to knowing man.

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Who is God?

No human mind, learning, hypothesis, or speculation can know God. In Job 11:7, Zophar asks the questions, “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” Later on in Job 37:23 Elihu, the son of Barachel, returns an answer: “Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.” Therefore we would subject ourselves to the revelation of the Holy Scripture in this matter. He that approaches to God MUST believe that He is. Period.

Who is God? In His primitive form God is love. 1Jo 4:8 *“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”* God is the essence of all essences. He is fountain source of all life. He is the originating ground of everything in existence. He is the uncreated essence who gives life to all and receives from naught but Himself. The deepest ground in God is love. Love is the deepest depth, the essence of His nature, at the root of all His being. George MacDonald says, love is the heart and ground of God's creation; it is His right to create and His power to create as well. The love that foresees creation is itself the power to create.

God is love

1Jn. 4:16 *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”*

Love is both light and fire. It is out of this original essence called love that physical light and fire owe their idea. From the first of firstness, a fire of love blazed within God. Love expresses itself. So we see in the shadow love found among men. It is difficult to hide love. It always finds a way to express itself. Love expresses itself by giving. Love must love. Love must have someone or something to love. Because of that eternal love which has no beginning the Father must have someone to love. He has the eternal Son, who eternally proceeds from the Father, but the Son is His very heart; the Son is Himself. So the Father's love nature drove Him to dream of a family. This is where man comes in. Man is a product of love. His origins are love thoughts. He is the result of

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love emotions. He is the answer to love desires.

Man was made to pacify as love quest, therefore a true man must be one who is capable of responding to the deepest love. God could not be love without making things to love. Whatever comes of Him must in some way possess that element that is His nature.

The life we call our own must be a response to that sort of life known as divine love. Love therefore circumscribes our world; our reality.

Man was created to love in response to divine love. He is the object of affection, but of what use would affection be if it cannot be recognized, not the least received? Man was created through foreknowledge. Ro 8:29 ¶ *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* What we know as foreknowledge is actually the exercise of love's vision.”

Man was first seen by love's eyes. And the true meaning of man can only be known as love's eyes once again exercises itself and tells the vision. If you think about this deeply you will find man's primal home love's eyes.

No man can truly discern another man if he does not love him. He may tell his observations and conclusion but he cannot know him; what he is. So much for criticisms not born of love. Man's roots are in love therefore the germ of his being is love.

2 CHAPTER TWO

Man's Origin

Again we ask the question, 'what is man, and where did he come from?' We say God created him. How so? Firstly, we must realize that creation is simply the manifestation of a revelation. Creation (as we know it) is the process whereby that which has been conceived in God's mind is brought forth. Therefore it would appear then that all things are created twice first on the inside of God, and after that in time. It must be understood that God's thoughts are alive. Whatever God thinks is. God's thoughts are potent; His mind is in filial relationship with His omnipotence. The creation within God then is the original creation. In the original creation the All-seeing, All-knowing eyes of God - those love eyes - is the womb from which things proceed; in the second creation the virgin wisdom of God is the womb out of which things proceed. Wisdom is the power to interpret the visions of God. Wisdom is what translates the unseen things of God into gross, tangible realities.

Back to our question, 'what is man, and where did he come from?' In fact, where did anything come from? Where did everything come from? The Scripture tells us in Col.1: 16-17, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." This refers to Christ.

Eph.1: 4-6, "just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world...**having predestined us** to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted **in the Beloved.**" (emphasis mine)

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Now compare the above scripture with Rom.8: 29, “For whom **He foreknew, He also predestined...**” If you were to lay out the process of man's creation in order it would be something like this:

1. God foreknew us (i.e. Knew or ‘saw’ us ahead of time)
2. Predestined us
3. Chose us (accepted us in the beloved Christ)
4. Called us
5. Justified us
6. Glorified us
7. Later brought us into this world and repeated in manifest form steps one through six

If the first step is that God saw us in Christ, one might say, He did not then create us He merely saw us... The thing we call foreknowledge is the process whereby God creates. It is an awesome mystery much too deep for human intellect to comprehend. He creates with His eyes. He sees what love in His heart impels Him to see. It's the exact way a trained sculptor, looking at a piece of wood, would say, “I see a chair in there.” There is a sense in which that chair is in there it is potentially there; but in another sense it's not in there. It's in the sculptor's mind. Do you see the point? I love the way Jacob Behmen describes it: “God unfolded his eternal nature, and through his active love, or desire, He caused that which heretofore had been in Him merely as spirit (as an image contained in a piece of wood before the artist has cut it out), to become substantial, corporeal.”

Son of His love

Jn.1:1-3 ¶ *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**”*

This is Christ Jesus.

Col 1:13 says, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” The Greek Bible renders the phrase 'dear son' as 'the Son of his love'. This is how the NKJV also translates this scripture. Jesus is the Son of God's

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love. What does this mean? Literally, God's love brought forth a son. That son is Christ. Like begets like; therefore Christ is love. Love brought forth love. And when God cast a loving gaze upon the Son of His love there He imagined many other sons in His similitude.

In His image.

In Christ.

He saw us in Him, like Him, like the Son.

Col 1:15, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature?" Firstborn over all CREATURES? I do not understand. How mix born and create in one sentence? The law of first things posits that all the others are in the first. It is by this law that we were all in Adam the first. And by the same token Levi was in Abraham when he met Melchizedek.

From the first of firstness when the Son was in being, when the first consciousness of His being was in Him He at the once knew His Father and chose to be the Son His Father meant Him to be. He subjected Himself to His Father's will and by so doing created a new type of life in Himself. Jn. 1:3b-4 originally reads: "that which was made in Him was life and the life was the light of men." There is that which was made in Him, not made through Him or by Him; but made in Him. In Himself. That life, that form of love that corresponds to God's creative love, that self-abnegating love, is the stalk from which all things were made.

3 CHAPTER THREE

Love at First Sight

In the world we say 'love at first sight' when someone at once develops affections for someone he is just seeing for the first time. We often think this sort of loving is irrational, risky. "How can you love someone you do not even know?" we're asked. 'You have to know someone to love that person' we are told. And yes, that is right if it is human love the one the Greek Bible translates as '*phileo*' we are talking about.

God's love is not *phileo*, it is something called 'agape'. It never existed on the earth before Jesus came. Jesus brought it. It is unlike *phileo*. It is first love; it is love at first sight. It never says, "I love you because..." There is no 'because' where this love is concerned. It loves because it is His nature. Love has to love. It loves because it cannot do otherwise. God is love. God cannot but love. Love is first. It is proton. Like we say, it is the deepest ground in God. It is at the bottom of all *because*s. It is not rational. It has nothing to lean on or fall back to. It is an original act. It is sovereignty. It's the divine magia. Its reasons are in itself.

1Jo 4:10 reads, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." 1Jo 4:19 says, "We love him, because he first loved us." He loved first. And that, not because of anything we did as Ro.5:8 says. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." 'Agape' looks not for a reason to love. It loves because love never fails. Love is never wrong. Love is the right thing to do. Love is eternal correctness.

Men describe first love as that original rush of love emotions we felt towards the first person we ever fell in love with. It is believed that one may love a hundred people in his lifetime, yet he cannot love any of

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the ninety-nine as he loved the first one. First love is believed to be in a class of its own. It is virgin love. This is the sort of love God has for each of us. But quite unlike ours His first love never fades. He loves you now as He loved you then in the heart of Christ before time began.

When God set His eyes upon us He loved us at once. It was love looking at the Son that saw us. Therefore, we came out from love, by love and were made for love.

We are love spirits. Love is our nature. Like our Father and source, to love is to live. To not love is to deny our selves. It is to bear false witness against ourselves. It is to be false.

4 CHAPTER FOUR

Redemption, a Love Proposition

The plan of redemption is a love proposition. The whole divine-human drama must not be understood on the ground of religion. Religion presents a false premise where we see the estranged relationship between a god and a worshipper who has broken moral or religious laws relating to worship. And now he must be punished. It tells that a substitute is found to bear his punishment; therefore he is free from his offence. He can now resume temple worship.

But I think this is not the accurate paradigm at all. This is the understanding of a disciple who has learnt his Bible imperfectly. From the onset God sets the drama in a garden; a garden whose very name, 'Eden', means pleasure. This is where man was first sighted, where indeed he was brought forth, revealed. The garden of pleasure on the East of Eden was man's first earthly home. It is a prophecy. It tells that man originated in and therefore belongs to a realm of pleasure, that his home is love, or that he should be at home in love.

God sets the man, I say, in a garden; not in a temple or on a mountain. What we call religion is love brought into legislation, distorted, misunderstood.

The first commandment of the Old Testament religion is love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God..." Jesus said the entire law and the prophets (the sum total of Old Testament religion) is just this: love God and love your neighbors. Therefore we can safely say that the purpose of religion is love. The objective of true religion is realized in love. 1Ti.1: 5 "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith."

That first man, that man of God's making, died in the garden. God was initially the sole object of his love. His eyes could see God

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because his heart in love could see God. His heart's forces were formerly directed towards God, but when he redirected his love away from God and towards himself God's image in him got distorted. He was no longer in the image of God; he no longer resembled the divine one. He became a false witness, a lie. He could no longer see God and consequently could no longer know himself. Narcissism had been born. The oldest cult self-worship had been founded. Thus Adam began to forget the meaning of his life, and his purpose and calling. Man became lost. Now humanity suffers a collective amnesia.

Four thousand years later God sent Jesus into the earth to implement the redemption plan. Once again it was not a religious proposition. It was a love affair, the greatest love story ever told. John, the apostle of love, has this to say about it: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" (Jn.3:16a) Love was the motive.

Jesus' coming was love's intervention. Jesus was a love messenger. He came on a love mission. He was an emissary of love and His very strategy was to love.

Love led Him to the place of His death; love led Him to an early grave love for His Father and love for fallen man.

Jesus died.

He died taking down with Him that loveless creature that had sinned its way into being; that freak, the offspring of intercourse between love and 'self'; that which came because man chose *self* above God.

The manner of death Jesus died was itself love working its way back into man's heart. He could have been stabbed to death or stoned or poisoned, but He chose the Cross, or was it His Father's choice? The Cross crosses man's will. It sets our diabolical, demoniac self at naught. It brings the old man the selfish man to an end. The utterance of the Cross is 'It is finished!' Our old man, the child of infidelity, the accursed offspring of self-love, that freak of nature has at last been terminated.

Jesus went down.

Jesus descended into hell and was hidden out of sight for three days and three nights. That too was a prophecy. That is the time required for the demands of justice to be met, for the wrath of God to expire itself. Sin and self has to be dealt with in a legal way. The grave was the judicial

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putting away of the accursed thing.

On the third day love entered into the dark regions of the dammed and brought forth from the dead and into the visions of love a new man the first new creation, His entire race in His loins.

Col. 1:13 calls Jesus the Son of God's love. He is the offspring of love. He is man's possibility of experiencing the greatest love yet manifested redeeming love. It was love that brought Him again into being. Ps. 88:11 "Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave?" the Revised Standard Version reads: "Is thy steadfast love declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in Abaddon?" Love was declared in the grave. Love brought Him forth; therefore we say resurrection power was first exhibited to bring back love on the scene. And resurrection power was love's effort to recreate.

The first new creation having been forged in hell, the place of hate and wrath, in rising out of these showed Himself to be superior to these hostile forces. Today in the place of greatest hate, wrath and vengeance, love will triumph. The first new creation is a testimony of love's triumph, of love's conquest, of love's superiority.

He was then brought into the earth, and was first sighted, like the first man, in a garden. And to who was He disclosed? To the love quest of a woman who loved Him. O, it is all about love isn't it? Even though He was bearing the blood of the sinless sacrifice He did not think it trivial to stop and respond to love.

Redemption is a love project. The gospel is a message of love. A messenger of love is one who bears a love story. And that is what we are. Dear Lord, grant that through us men would see your love, and respond to your love advances. Eternal redemption is nothing but love remaking, love retaking, and love perfecting.

Today the whole of mankind is suffering from collective amnesia. Man's deepest quest is to know himself, to understand what he is. It seems impossible to come to this knowledge. It is a powerful force that blocks the way of its attainment. And until our quest leads us into the dreary regions of love we would never know. Only love's eyes can tell the primal and only true meaning of man.

5 CHAPTER FIVE

The Greatest Force on Earth

If we were to describe God in a folklore we would say He is the head of a species of Godkind known as Elohim, who are nothing but pure love spirits. God stirred himself to produce creation. He was desirous of having children of his own kind Godkind; lovekind. Man had no knowledge of any evil; no lust, no covetousness, no pride, no envy, no anger, no hate, nothing but pure love. Man was created to live in love. Functioning in majesty of his humanity meant loving. His will was initially in God's because God was the centre of his life.

Man's root is in love, therefore the germ of his life is love; therefore all men can be touched by love. Love will go where doctrines cannot go. Love will say what sermons cannot say. The hardened criminal in the penitentiary can be touched by love, for love never fails.

The wisest man in the old world said in Song 8:6 "love is strong as death". He probable thought of the strength of death. All men seem powerless against death. It's the strongest foe known to man. Whenever it comes into a home and takes a victim all men can do is weep. Once death binds itself upon a man once a man dies he's never coming back; he never comes off death's grip. So, King Lemuel thought, must be the nature of love. The king is right in that he describes a type of love known as 'phileo'. Phileo was all that man was left with after he, through self-love, lost that pure sort of love that seeks not its own (1Cor.13:), that is stronger than death. Phileo is that natural, human love as a mother's love for her child or a man's love for his newly wedded wife. That was the highest type of love of which the human spirit was capable until Jesus came on the scene bearing a new kind of love.

Says E. W. Kenyon, "this common human love of ours was the most blessed asset of the human, and yet the most dangerous. This

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'phileo' love is the goddess of the divorce court; it is the high priestess of human suffering, the parent of most of our tears, sorrows and heart agonies. It turns to jealousy and murder at the slightest pretext. It is purely selfishness; it feeds only upon self-gratification... human love is the interpretation of the 'human' as 'Agape' is the interpretation of God. 'Phileo' springs from the natural heart, and yet how powerful 'phileo' could be. Think what the world would be without it. The thing we call 'break down of law and order' is nothing but break down of love. When love, even 'phileo', is in a place some form of beauty and harmony obtains.

Love is a beautiful thing.

Love is a powerful thing.

All the fighting among nations is the result of its absence in the heart of our rulers. The war-torn countries of the Middle East need a little of it, and how things would change.

6 CHAPTER SIX

A New Kind of Love

Jesus was a love messenger; His mission on earth was a love mission. He came, impelled by love His Father's and His to restore to mankind the one thing that was missing the God kind of love. The new birth imparts man with a new nature, God's nature, which is nothing but pure love.

Here is what Jesus said in John 13:34 "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" A new commandment! But how so? The first commandment of the Decalogue says to love God, and in Lev.19:18 "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD". Quite frankly the Jews had received commandment to love, so in what way is this commandment new?

Simply this: firstly, the disciples were asked to love 'as I have loved you'. How did Jesus love them? Utterly! Unconditionally! He loved them to the end (Jn. 13:1), He loved to the point of giving His life for them. Secondly, Jesus loved them with God's own love, agape. The new commandment is 'have agape for one another'. They previously had 'phileo', human love. Now they are required to have 'agape'. It seemed that Jesus coined that word. He certainly introduced it into the Greek. It wasn't previously used. It is the exact same word in 1Jn. 4, "God is love". God is agape.

It is not possible to have this love apart from God. It is the very God. It is the out flowing of divinity Himself. Its presence is the acid test of true salvation. How can one know for sure if he is saved? 1Jn. 3:14 ¶ "We **know** that we have passed from death unto life, because we love

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the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” The man who loves not is still in spiritual death, it matters not what he professes.

The Properties of Agape

1 Cor. 13:4-8, is how we recognize the outworking of love. It is the practical expression of agape.

“¶ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...”

The pursuit of such a love should be our utmost drive. 1 Cor. 14:1 admonishes, “Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [that] love make it your aim, your great quest.” (Amp) How suggestive this text is: 'make it your aim'. Aim, I say, not 'one of your aims'. In other words don't even make going to heaven your aim. Make attaining to the fullest measure of this type of love your aim. Oh that churches could make it its aim, that marriages would make it their aim, that governments would make it their aim. It is the greatest force in the universe. It is the force of God. Unleashing it is unleashing God. Agape never fails, never fails to deliver results. If only we could believe this.

Eph 3:19 “*And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*” Christ's love is God's love. To know this love is to be filled with God's fullness. The man who has come into perfection is the man who has brought himself under the government of love. When vegetable life arrives at maturity we know because it blooms, produces flowers and bears ripe fruit. We call that the harvest. Man is like a tree. When fully mature it bears but one fruit love.

“But the harvest of the Spirit is love: love's joy, love's peace, love's longsuffering, love's kindness, love's goodness, love's faithfulness” (Gal.5:22)

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One with God

1Jn.3:1a, “See ye what love the Father hath given to us, that children of God we may be called;” (YLT). It is His love in our hearts that makes us His children. Jesus said this is the singular feature by which all men would know that we are His disciples. Jn. 13:35 “By **this** shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

In Jn.17: 21 Jesus prays to the Father, “that they all may be one, as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee; that they also in us may be one, that the world may believe that Thou didst send me.” Jesus is one with the Father not in office but in nature, in the essential thing that makes God God. 'Thou in me' (as love in my heart). “I in thee” (as the love that eternally proceeds from you) and “That they may be engrafted in us.” Wow!

Better than Wine

Song 1:2 ¶ “*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.*”

We live in a time of abounding iniquity. And the one object of iniquity is to smother the flame of God's love in men's hearts. Mt 24:12 “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” What is love? It is the law of the new creation. It is the only law of the New Testament. Law it is called but it is not an external regulation. It is the governing principle of the New Man. 2Cor.5:14 “For the love of Christ overmasters us” (Weymouth's). “For the love of the Christ constrains us” is how several other translators render it. It is not the commandment to love that constrains us, but love itself. It is divine government.

Iniquity is often referred to as lawlessness. It is anti-love. It moves men beyond the constraints of love. It causes strange behavior in men. Whenever men act in a ground which is not love it is a strange thing. This is what iniquity forces men to do.

A certain one was perfect in all his ways until iniquity was found in him. (Eze. 28:15) Iniquity turned him to become self-seeking; iniquity

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made a freak of him. Jesus said because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Is this not what is happening all around us today? Iniquity has abounded and even in the church love is waning: men can no longer endure sound doctrine. Many no longer love truth (2Thessa.2:10). Many no longer love God. I am amazed to see the level of hatred for God that is within the American culture. 'How did America arrive here?' I ask myself. Oh, the hostility against God. 'What has God done to them?' I asked my wife, then I remembered the scripture: in Jn. 15:25 "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.'

Western culture is fast becoming the most pagan culture on earth. There are a lot of things they do there that causes even heathen cultures like china and India to shudder. How will the West be saved again? How will their hearts be turned back to God? How will they come to love Him again? How would the world be delivered from the intoxication of self-seeking, power, greed, hate and all the vices petrifying the human race?

We have found the answer: when He kisses them with the kisses of His mouth they will see that His love is better than wine. The Father seeks to kiss the world through His children. We will love the world into life. Love never fails. Not our sermons but our love will get the job done. We will preach to them but it will be God working in us to reconcile them to Himself. Our preaching would be potent because it could be proceeding from a heart that loves them. We will love them into life.

7
CHAPTER SEVEN

Fall Down and Die! Error

There is a disturbing development among a good part of the church in Nigeria. A certain understanding of prayer among a particular sect of the church has steadily gained wide acceptance and must be addressed. Folks are focusing on killing their enemies. “Fall down and die” they chant, “die, die, die, die!” they rant. They are merciless towards those they regard to be their enemies.

Jesus said in Mat.5:43-46 ¶ *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"***

The law never taught the Jews to love their enemies. It said in fact, 'an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth'. The law never taught them mercy, forgiveness and love for the enemy. Jesus said this is the new law. Love your neighbor as yourself - even if he be your enemy. And who is my neighbor? It is anyone to whom you could be or for whom you could do anything good at any time. This is exactly what the story of the 'good Samaritan' illustrates.

Jesus never taught us to avenge ourselves. He said to love our enemies. Pray for them, not against them. You were like them when our heavenly Father loved you. You were his enemy by wicked works. You hated Him. You were contrary to Him. Yet He loved you. If you act in like manner you would be the children in deed of our heavenly Father.

“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those

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who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” is this what we do for members of the Boko Haram sect? For the witches and wizards in our families? Nay, we kill them. We believe that loving them would produce no good. We do not think the Lord meant it that way. But He did. Jesus believed in the power of love. He demonstrated it when He prayed for the very men who were killing Him. “Father forgive them” Jesus cried, “they do not know what they are doing.” That is the prayer of the strong in Spirit. That was Stephen's prayer. “Lay it not to their charge” he cried, “I have forgiven them”. What manner of man dares say these words, save one who is nearing perfection? Save the true Christian. This is the true man. This man is like His Father in heaven. Lord, help us to make love our aim. Amen.

CHAPTER EIGHT

First Love

Rev.2: 4-5, "*Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.*"

It is instructive to note that the church to which the Lord Jesus addresses this charge is the same church to which apostle Paul said, "*Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:*" (Eph.1:15-16)

The church in Ephesus had love for all the saints. It was visible. It was reported. Now it is gone. That first love was gone and so were the pure works. Something earthly had taken shape within the church. That heavenly glory, shine, aura had been replaced by dead works. Religion had eaten away the pure thing. Decay was in the system. True, the meetings were still full; folks were still getting blessed, but maggots were there. Petrification was taking place. They needed to return to first love.

That is the state of many churches today. How the mighty has fallen; how the primal glory has departed; how men's things have substituted the divine thing, how lesser objective have eclipsed the only thing, namely: that we should grow in love towards God, evidenced in our love for His children.

I watch with so great pain as weekly worshippers throng our churches. Blind they go in, blinder they return. How many of these men know the hope of our calling? How many understand the real issues of salvation and God's demand of us? How many are walking in the light of al restored truths?

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How many of us truly love God? How many are coming to Him that they may know Him and love Him more? How many people are willing to deny self that they may gain Him? How many people are willing to do whatever it takes to find true religion; love that is higher than the law.

The love that necessitated all the 'thou shall not's is our ancestry. We were made for love; not for law. Our true selves are our love selves. This love is glory in the realm of the spirit; this love is perfection demystified. This love never fails. God's eternal purpose will not fail, cannot fail, because it came from love. Oh that that love would baptize us again. Amen.

O great and holy God, I pray thee, set open my inwardness to me; that I may rightly know what I am; and open in me what was shut up in Adam. Amen.

ABOUT ERNEST PAUL

Ernest Paul is functions in prophetic ministry as a voice to steer individuals and churches into greater proximity with the unfolding purposes of God in the earth. Executive Director of TSL Global Initiatives He is also the Senior Pastor of CentrePort Abuja, Nigeria. With over 22 years in ministry Ernest has served in various ministry capacities, at one time, serving as the administrator of Breakthrough School of Ministry, overseeing operation of some 17 schools across West Africa and Cameroun. He is married to Robyn and they are blessed with two children: Errita and John.

