

### 3. B. COMMUNION WITH GOD THE FATHER

How God's love to us and our love to God are similar. We must now consider how this love of God to us, and our love to God are similar, and how they differ.

There are two ways in which God's love to us and our love to God are similar. They are both a love of rest, contentment, and delight. To rest with contentment is to be silent, without grumbling or complaining. God's love is so full that it will not allow Him to complain of anything in the lives of those He loves. God is content with His decision to set us as for the purpose of salvation. Therefore, God delights in the object of His love.

It is a love of gladness and joy. The soul of God has no joy in those that turn back to their wicked ways.

The believer's love to God, is our response to the love of God to us. And this we are enabled to do by the indwelling Holy Spirit. In the Psalms we find David's full expression of his love to God. **PSM 116:7** "Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you" Apart from the fact that we are commanded to love the Lord our God (**DEUT 6:5**) It is now a natural response from us because we now have a heart of flesh, not that of stone that has no life in it.

The mutual love of God and the saints are also similar in that their communion of love is in, and through Christ. God's communion in love with us is through Christ. Our communion in love with God is through Christ. Do we not end our prayers in the name of Christ? Christ is the highway or treasury through which this communion in love takes place, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God's chief love is for His Son, and then to us, through His Son.

God chose to love the elect before the foundation of the earth. And he has nurtured and protected that love through the eons of time and will continue to protect it for all time.

God pours out His love on Christ, and as it flows down on Christ, so we are the recipients of that love through Christ. The first fruits of God's love are always first to Christ, and then to us through Christ.

Does not Christ, our Great High Priest, not intercede for us at the throne of Grace. It is as a result of our expression of love to God, through Christ that this intercession is effective. It is through Christ that all our desires and delights, our satisfactions and our obedience are passed on to the Father.

There are then differences between the love of the Father to the Saints, and the Saints love to the Father.

The love of God is a sovereign love. It is God's prerogative - freely given to us. Our love to God, however, is duty bound - in appreciation for His kindness. Every mercy, every Blessing we receive at God's hand, is as the result of His love to us. But this love of God for us is also a disciplinary love. God wishes only the best for us, so He will discipline us when we go astray.

Our love to God is duty bound. Any person who has a favour granted to them, in decency, would show appreciation and gratitude. Though the Father requires our love, He is not benefited by it. Our love to God consists of rest, delight, reverence, and obedience. It is our duty to honour God as our Father. **MAL 1:6** "If then I am the Father, where is my honour?" (A shortish Book, but speaks truths to the heart)

God's love to us, precedes our love to God - a Father loves his child, even though the infant does not know his Father. God loves His creation, of which man is at the pinnacle.

Through the fall, men became God haters. This is clearly set out in the first chapter of Romans. But while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **ROM 5:8**

Our love responds to God's love. No unbeliever would ever turn his heart to God, had not God first set His love on that soul. God presents Himself to us as lovely and desirable.

God's love for us is constant. It remains steadfast. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases" goes the song. It never increases or decreases according to God's mood. Whereas our love is never the same - full of fickleness. Although we have no legitimate reason to change, yet we do. God's love for us is the same, from beginning to end. It is for that purpose that once set aside, set aside for eternity. Anything that we do, cannot increase, or decrease His love, it is an all-encompassing eternal love.

However, it may be perceived that God's love to us can be changeable in two ways.

- A. This love of God is changeable in its communications to us. We experience times of lows, thinking that God has forgotten us, and wondering why things are as they are. But the source and strength of that love to us is the same.
- B. God "Pours out His love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit". We have a sense of God's love for us through the Spirit. This varies and changes.

And the reason for these perceived changes in God's love for us is to be found in our Spiritual growth and maturity. It is to build up our steadfast hope in God. When we go through the troughs of life, do we say to ourselves "I have no other hope but in God to see me through this" Building up our faith and hope. One of the comments in Spurgeon's Treasury of David says regarding **PSM 42:5** "Why are you downcast Oh my soul" - Faith tells the soul what Christ has done for it (past), and so comforts it. Hope revives the soul with news of what Christ will do for us (future). Both draw at one source, Christ, and His promise.

Another aspect of this "cooling" effect, is that the Lord so often has to bring us back to obedience. Once our assurance is grounded, it needs to be tested in the fires of tribulation. We are to look to Christ, and Christ alone in the Storms of Life.

God rebukes and chastens us, but woe to us if He should withdraw His love to us. God does indeed love His people, but He does not love their sinning. Our love to God ebbs and flows, but God's love to His people never changes. It is the same yesterday, today and forever.