

Loving God and Our Neighbor

by A.W. Tozer

True religion is summed up in the spiritual love of Jesus, which is distinct from human love.

Scripture: Matthew 22:37

Topics: "Divine Love", "Human Love"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes that true religion is encapsulated in the spiritual love of Jesus, which fulfills the law and the prophets by loving God and our neighbors. He distinguishes between human love, which, despite its imperfections, is essential for life on earth, and divine love, which is superior and comes from God. Tozer warns against conflating these two types of love, as doing so can lead to spiritual frustration. He highlights the importance of recognizing the divine love that transcends human experience, as articulated in Charles Wesley's hymn. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a deeper understanding of love that is rooted in the divine, elevating our relationships with God and others.

Transcript

The whole of true religion can be summed up in the spiritual love of Jesus. To love God and to love our neighbor was said by our Lord to be the fulfilling of the law and the prophets. All Christians believe that God reveals Himself as Christ; so the love of Jesus is in truth the love of God. Love as experienced by human beings may be on either of two levels, the human or the divine. These are not the same. They differ not only in intensity and elevation but in kind. Human love is undoubtedly the best thing left to the human race.

Though it is often perverted and sometimes degraded, it is still Adam's best product, and without it, life on earth would be unendurable. Let us imagine what the world would be like if every trace of human love were suddenly removed. The heart recoils from the contemplation of such a horror. Without love, earth would not differ from hell except for the difference of location. Let us treasure what is left of love among the sons of men. It is not perfect, but it makes life bearable and even sweet here below.

But human love is not divine love and should never be confused with it. Among the sentimental religionists, the two are accepted as being the very same and no distinctions are made. This is a great moral blunder and one that leads to spiritual frustration and disappointment. If we are to think clearly and pray rightly, we must recognize the difference between love that is merely human and that other love which cometh down from above. Charles Wesley knew the difference and made it clear in his famous lines: Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down.

Here all grades and degrees of human love are acknowledged, and the true love which comes down from heaven is placed above them as far as the heaven is above the earth. This is not only good poetry, it is good theology as well.

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