

Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S. LAMPEL



THEY HAVE MOUTHS, BUT THEY DO NOT SPEAK;
THEY HAVE EYES, BUT THEY DO NOT SEE;
THEY HAVE EARS, BUT THEY DO NOT HEAR,
NOR IS THERE ANY BREATH AT ALL IN THEIR MOUTHS.
THOSE WHO MAKE THEM WILL BE LIKE THEM,
YES, EVERYONE WHO TRUSTS IN THEM.

PSALMS 135:15-18

Hemti knelt before the tiny shrine he had carved into the thick wall of his mud hut. In this space dedicated to Nekhbet, the local goddess of his village Neckhab, the peasant set two small, concave pottery shards—one holding a handful of grain, the other a portion of beer. Having fed the goddess, he bowed his head and clasped his hands together over his head in an attitude of pleading obeisance.

Simple of heart and mind, Hemti possessed little understanding of religion. From childhood he had observed and been taught by his parents to make daily offerings to Nekhbet, the local vulture-headed goddess, to seek her blessings and to appease her temper. He could still remember what his father had told him, repeating the words of the priest, “Fear the gods and bring them presents, then they will not be unfavorable toward you.”

So Hemti arose every morning with this pressing weight upon him, to feed and placate the goddess to obtain a productive and safe day out in the fields that surrounded their small village nestled against the Nile.



Unlike the Greeks and Romans, ancient Egypt’s seemingly endless collection of gods and goddesses, low or high, local or universal was never organized into a well-ordered pantheon, with one supreme, national god ruling over all the demigods and worshiped at his temple in every town, large or small. This meant that Egyptian religion itself was, especially for the common man, regional rather than portable, confusingly multifaceted, and, ultimately, meaningless. He prayed and made offerings to statues of his gods fashioned into fanciful representations with human torsos but heads of a falcon, a cobra, a cat or dog, crocodile, hippopotamus, bull or cow. More often than not the god or goddess was perceived to be angry, happy to rain down misfortune or treachery on humans unless their wrath was appeased by sacrifice or offering. At the least the gods were self-centered, desiring their own fortune and pleasure at the expense of their lowly worshipers.

No matter what the ancient culture—Egyptian, Roman, Greek, Chaldean, Mycenaean, Canaanite—all worshiped gods invented by man, gods that were represented in painted or statue forms made by man. And Yahweh pulled no punches in describing both the worshiped and the worshiper of these pretenders.

The idols of the nations are but silver
and gold,
The work of man’s hands.
They have mouths, but they do not
speak;
They have eyes, but they do not see;
They have ears, but they do not hear,
Nor is there any breath at all in their
mouths.
Those who make them will be like them,
Yes, everyone who trusts in them.

Psalms 135:15-18

The contrast between these human-devised deities and the God we worship is not just that ours is real and theirs were not. The ancient religious systems, some of which survive even today, were based on alienation and fear, rather than the compassion, love, and grace of Yahweh and His Son, Christ Jesus. In fact, while one reads of their devotees loving, adoring, showing reverence toward these pagan gods, one never reads of the gods loving them back. Every kindness, every act of generosity or grace, every sacrificial offering was directed from the worshiper to the god—never in the opposite direction.

Even if they had been real, these gods were self-centered, self-adoring tyrants interested only in satisfying their own desires. Even if they had been real, they were not even close to the nature of Yahweh, the one true God. ☂



From New Kingdom tomb of Horemheb, Valley of the Kings, Egypt. The king with Anubis, the jackel-headed god of the dead.

Cover: Wall from Ptolemaic temple at Kom Ombo, Egypt, dedicated to Sobek, the crocodile god and Haroeris, a solar manifestation of Horus, the falcon-headed god.

Issue #804, April 2017.

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A GOD WHO LOVES

Beginning with a Chaldean named Abram, and passing through his descendants of Isaac and Jacob, the Lord God fashioned a chosen people He named Israel. Why did He do this? He does not give a reason for establishing His first covenant with Abram; the emphasis of the covenant is on Yahweh's grace and generosity.

Now the Lord said to Abram,
"Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will
curse.
And in you all the families of the earth
will be blessed."

Genesis 12:1-3

Abram had done nothing to earn or deserve such magnanimity from the Creator of the universe. All he did, after the fact, was believe and obey.

So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him.

Genesis 12:4a

Later, explained to Moses and then explained by Moses to the tribes of Israel, the Lord would give His reason for choosing this people over the other nations of the earth. What was His reason for choosing them out, nurturing them, protecting them, sanctifying them as holy, giving Israel a place in His heart reserved just for them?

Why, oh why, did He love them?
Because He loved them.

"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

Deuteronomy 7:6-8



The Lord God of heaven is as distinct from the invented gods of man as brilliant noon-day is from midnight. Ancient man saw in his gods little more than power he himself lacked, the ability (if not the inclination) to manipulate the weather, to make women to be fertile, to enrich the annual crops. So ancient man prayed to mysterious, enigmatic

gods that he imagined might, if sufficiently bribed and cajoled by offerings or sacrifices or poetic incantations, answer the supplicant's entreaty. This was nothing more than a cold, hard business transaction. The supplicant would approach the god much as one would the proprietor of a shop: "You claim to have what I need, so I will pay your price to obtain it."

In the transaction there is no mention of relationship, no mention of affection or reciprocal love between mortal and supposed immortal. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead—the book of "spells and incantations, hymns and litanies, magical formulae and names, words of power and prayers" for the dead—there is only one mention of love, in a hymn of adoration to the great god Ra: "Thou art greatly feared, thy form is majestic, and very greatly art thou beloved by those who dwell in the Other World." That is, Ra being loved by the other gods. No mention of humans loving him, and surely no mention of Ra loving humans.

There is only one God who truly loves, who has demonstrated that love from the

God's love tells us that He is friendly and His word assures us that He is our friend and wants us to be His friends. No man with a trace of humility would first think that he is a friend of God; but the idea did not originate with men. Abraham would never have said, "I am God's friend," but God Himself said that Abraham was His friend. The disciples might well have hesitated to claim friendship with Christ, but Christ said to them, "Ye are my friends." Modesty may demur at so rash a thought, but audacious faith dares to believe the word and claim friendship with God. We do God more honor by believing what He has said about Himself and having the courage to come boldly to the throne of grace than by hiding in self-conscious humility among the trees of the garden.

A. W. Tozer

beginning of created man's walk on this earth, who has impressed His love into His creation in a uniquely personal way.



When the Lord God released Israel from Egyptian bondage He did more than just point the way toward the promised land. He personally accompanied the children of Israel; for forty years He safely led them through many trials, many dangers, acting as both Savior and Judge along the way. When the Egyptians pursued Israel, presumably trapping them against the sea, the Lord was their protector. He did this in cloud and fire.

As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord... The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

Exodus 14:10, 19-20

Every member of the Trinity went with Israel in their sojourn. God the Father showed Himself in cloud over the tent of meeting. There He would converse with Moses "as a man speaks with a friend." Jehovah would not reveal the fullness of His glory to Moses, for mere flesh cannot withstand that. But He would speak to him from the cloud.

Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.

"Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people." And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here."

Exodus 33:9-11a, 13-15

Father God spoke the words of His laws and precepts, as well as His counsel to Moses, and in a similar yet silent fashion the Holy Spirit transferred His creative genius to individuals for the constructing of the place and accoutrements of worship.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship."

Exodus 31:1-5



Wall in the tomb of Ramose, a noble in the 18th Dynasty, Egypt.

Then there was the Son. The Creator and Savior of the world was already at work watching over the children of God. Known throughout the Old Testament—in the stories of Abraham, Jacob, the burning bush, to the prophets Balaam and Elijah, to Israel in Judges—as “the angel of the Lord” or “the angel of God,” the Son was the One guiding and protecting them in the cloud by day and fire by night.

The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

Exodus 14:19.

The fullness of Jehovah—Father, Son and Spirit—went personally with Israel, faithfully as a loving parent, supplying their food and water, giving counsel for their well-being, sometimes chastising, always loving. ☂

If Yahweh required sacrifices and offerings under the old covenant, how is that different from sacrifices and offerings to the ancient pagan gods? And if there were rules and regulations demanded by the pagan gods, why were those worse than the Lord’s laws required under the old covenant?

Fair questions.

In some practical terms there were similarities. For example, monetary and food offerings had essentially the same purpose: support of the clergy. The temples and priests of pagan gods were supported by the worshipers; food sacrificed to the gods was either consumed by the priests, or surplus sold on the market by the temple. Likewise, any meat or grain offerings that were not consumed by fire at the Jerusalem temple were given to the Levitical priests and their families for their table.

“Now this shall be the priests’ due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, either an ox or a sheep, of which they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. You shall give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep. For the Lord your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the Lord forever.”

Deuteronomy 18:3-5

While we may not sacrifice animals or offer grain offerings in protestant churches today, we bring our offering of money for the support of the church and to pay the salaries of the church staff.

The Lord God also used animal sacrifices to show that atonement for man’s sins required a blood sacrifice—life for life.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

Leviticus 17:11

This was the Lord God instructing His people for all time that sin required payment, and that payment could only be blood. Someone must die. Under the old covenant an animal could be killed in place of the human. Under the new covenant, it would have to be a human.



More than anything else, the difference between the economy of pagan worship and the worship of the Lord God is the difference between fear and love. Ancient man feared his gods—not reverential fear, but fright. He feared what they might do to him, he feared that they might *not* do for him.

In contrast, the Lord yearns for a relationship with His people. Instead of waiting for them to come to Him, He seeks them out. He loves first. God’s requirements for His followers are based not on His needs, His selfish demands, but on the inherent failing of flesh. Man is born sinful, depraved. Because God loves, and desires a relationship with man, He sets up the means by which man can atone for his sin so as to be acceptable to the relationship. Under the old covenant that atonement was accomplished through the death of animals. Under the new covenant atonement is accomplished through the death of one Man.

LIFE FOR LIFE

The God of the New Testament is the God of the Old. There is no bright line between the testaments; no switch was pulled to change direction, to try something new because the old was no longer working.

The God of the Mosaic Law had already set in motion the events of His Son being born “Jesus” on earth 1,500 years later. His economy, in full, worked out to the last detail, was devised and set in motion by the Triunity of the Godhead before earth and time were ever spoken into existence.

So the sacrifices and blood of the Old Testament—it is true; that epoch was drenched in blood—were not the old way devised for God’s relationship with man, a way which was then changed to something new and different at the cross. No, it is all of a piece, beginning to end, Genesis to The Revelation. One God, one plan, one system for God to save man from himself.

Abraham was saved by faith alone, the same as any Christian today.

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.

Genesis 4:3-5a

From at least the second generation of humanity, sacrifice has been a part of God’s economy. Something must die and shed its blood for Him to be properly worshiped. To please God, to atone for sin and thus have a relationship with Him, blood must be shed. Because man’s sin was incessant, sacrifice had to be incessant as well: repeated sin, for which man had to be repeatedly atoned.

Why? Because God is holy, and cannot and will not permit sin in His presence.

“For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Leviticus 11:44-45

Man, under the Mosaic Law, was always playing catch-up, bringing sacrifices to atone for sin previously committed because the Law was never conclusive: it never atoned for sins in perpetuity, or even the next day. The writer to the Hebrews put it succinctly: “The Law made nothing perfect.”

The Mosaic Law, with all its ceremony and feasts and offerings and sacrifices, was meant to define what a holy God considers sin, and to demonstrate man’s inability to please God through behavior, for it was impossible for man to keep the Law. Oh, he could manage to obey a few points here and there, but that wasn’t good enough. Breaking of the smallest portion of the Law was the same as breaking all of it.



Wall in the temple of King Seti in Abydos, Egypt. Here the king is making offering to Horus, the falcon-headed god.

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."

Galatians 3:10



The Law proved that man could not earn his own salvation—so what was man to do?

Nothing but believe.

It was God's plan all along to do, Himself, what man could not. Since man could not make himself sufficiently holy and righteous, God would take care of it. Instead of untold thousands of rams and goats and sheep and lambs spilling their blood for man's sins, God would supply one—just one—Lamb who would atone for all man's sins once and for all.

The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:29


Herein is love, love unimaginable, love boundless and extravagant; herein is a giv-

ing love that Hemti the Egyptian would never recognize in his god Nekhbet. To anyone accustomed to the ancient pagan gods, this act of self-sacrifice in a deity would be as alien as little green men from the planet Zerk to us today.

This was God's plan all along. He meant to do it; He *wanted* to do it. God created man for communion—and to bring Himself glory. But even before God created the first man, He knew that that desired communion would require the spilling of His own blood.

Life for life.

In the Law, Yahweh was saying to Israel, *Blood must be shed before sinful man can have a relationship with My holiness. Don't you understand? The only blood sufficient for this is My own!*

So God Himself came to earth, Love itself in the form of the God/Man Jesus of Nazareth. To live, to teach, to suffer, and to die. He came to spill His own blood upon the sacrificial altar: the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. 

GOD ON THE ALTAR

"For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him?"

Deuteronomy 4:7

Throughout time there have been storied love affairs, beautiful and profound, exquisitely loving relationships between human beings: John and Abigail Adams, Queen Victoria and her Prince Albert, Harry and Bess Truman, the platonic, brotherly devotion between Jonathan and David. People have loved other people since Adam discovered one of his ribs missing.

We think we know all about love; it is part of most every day of our lives. From the first blush of it on the schoolyard grounds,

stumbling teenage infatuation, that first breath-stealing kiss, to marriage vows and the brand new, overpowering love that bonds us at first sight with our newborn, to the visceral pain that accompanies loss—all these and more inform what we humans know of love.

But if we stopped with that, if we went no further than our own experience in the defining of love, we would be no better than our friend Hemti and his neighbors along the Nile. Hemti and his fellow Egyptians in antiquity had no higher standard for love than each other. When it came to that quality and experience, they received nothing from their so-called gods, those stick figures that stared back at them with vacant detachment.

Modern believers, however, have experienced a higher form of love.

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
John 15:13

Of course, that goes without saying. Obviously if someone is willing to give his own life for another, that must surely be the pinnacle of love. But what would astound the ancient Egyptians—and what should astound us—is that the "one" who said that was God Himself, in flesh, and He did indeed "lay down His life"—not just for His friends, but for people who hated Him with every fiber of their being.

Christians enjoy a unique—unique in all of history—relationship with their God, the only true God. And He is unique, not just because He alone is God, but He is unique in His behavior and qualities. No other god *behaves* like Yahweh.

From the very beginning, in the Garden, the Lord God—*Yahweh elohim*—did not just create the first man, He understood him, He cared about him.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

Genesis 2:18, 21-22

Trace the behavior of God through the stories of the Old Testament; there you will discover deity unbounded: infinite yet personal, eternal yet immediate, sovereign yet gracious, unchanging yet understanding, omnipotent yet tender, righteous yet forgiving, holy yet welcoming.

All of this is surpassed by His incomprehensible, breathtaking act of sending and sacrificing His own Son for the sins of man. The life is in the blood, and the only way for sinful humans to have life with God—in eternity now and eternity future—is for blood to be shed.

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8

Jesus the Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God, whose death on the cross atoned for all sins in those who trust in Him, this Jesus is not separate from God the Father. In ways we may never comprehend, they are one and the same. The members of the triune Godhead enjoy a mystical, multidimensional unity: all three are one with the others. When His disciple Philip asked, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us," Jesus answered,

"Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do

not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves."

John 14:9-11

The Son is in the Father, the Father in the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both. They can, to human perception, be separated, as when the Father sent the Son to earth. But make no mistake: everything Christ suffered on the cross was suffered by His Father as well. Our theology is sound when we say, "God shed His own blood to save sinners."

The result of that sacrifice is that believers are added into that family—not as demigods, but as children and heirs. Now we too have a mystical union with the Godhead: the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in us, we are now in Christ and He is in us, and the mighty Lord God—*Yahweh elohim*—is now our "Father," in whom we may confide any time, any place.

And it is all of love.

God's love for us. ☞



Sanctuary (holy of holies) of temple dedicated to the gods Ptah, Amen-Re, Re-Harakhte, and King Ramesses deified (third from left) at Abu Simbel, Upper Egypt.

Early in the morning, before breakfast and leaving for work, Tony enters a small room in the basement of his house. He sits quietly in his comfortable chair for a few moments, gathering his thoughts. He then closes his eyes, and the first word on his lips is “Father.”

He brings no offering, no sacrifice beyond his time and adoration. He comes without fear, without trembling, for Tony knows that his Father in heaven loves him. He knows, not just from teaching but from experience, that the One to whom he prays welcomes his prayer. His God is not impatient, distracted, or absent, but eager to hear from him. So he approaches his God with reverent confidence; respectful, but without fear of retribution.

Tony begins with words of adoration and thanksgiving for his God. He speaks these not out of duty or habit, but as an expression of his heart. Just as when he was a small child, telling his mom or dad that he loved them, he wants to tell God of his love for Him—and to thank God for His love and consideration for him. Along with his praise and thanksgiving Tony carries certain burdens and needs to his God’s throne, but he knows that every entreaty is wrapped inside the sovereignty of God: the One to whom he prays may or may not answer as Tony wishes, and somehow, mysteriously, he finds comfort in this.

Tony is a Christian, and he prays to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezra and Nehemiah; the God of Paul and Peter and John. He prays to the God of his dad, and his dad, and his dad; his mom, and her mom, and her mom. He prays to the God worshiped at the church just around the corner from his house, as well as thousands upon thousands of churches around the world.

Tony prays to a God who is a gracious, loving, attentive Father, who is also the Fa-

ther of the Son who, through His obedience and bloody sacrifice, made it possible for Tony to pray as he does. Tony prays supernaturally, for his every prayer upward is informed and energized by God’s Spirit, and every response downward to him from his Father is translated by the same Spirit from the language of heaven into the language of his heart.

That is, Tony prays to God, because of and through God, by means of God.



In this modern age we have become complacent about the privileges we as Christians enjoy. Many Americans take for granted the extraordinary civic liberties and freedoms they have by birthright, liberties few in the rest of the world will ever experience. Just so, those who were born and raised in a Protestant Christian environment do not realize how unique in history it is to have such an intimate relationship with very God.

Ancient adherents lived under the strictures of a “God” of a different definition—as well as many today. Muslims call him “Allah,” and according to his teachings recorded

by the prophet Muhammad in the Quran, Muslims are to secure their place in Paradise by killing all unbelievers, killing in as gruesome a manner as possible all homosexuals. Roman Catholics believe in a “God” who requires adherents to earn their way into his presence by means of good works. Neither of these religions worship a God of grace, of mercy, of sacrificial love.

Jesus is the One who makes the difference, and Muslims and Catholics alike diminish Him. To Muslims, He was just another prophet; to Catholics, His death on the cross was insufficient for salvation. But to those who have placed their trust in Him, according to God’s holy word, He is Lord, He is Savior, He is the only Son of God—in fact, He and God are One and the same.

He says again, “I am the begotten of the One God, before Abraham was, I am,” and remember what the words “I am” were in Hebrew. They were the name of God, which must not be spoken by any human being, the name which it was death to utter... If you had gone to Buddha and asked him, “Are you the son of Bramah?” he would have said, “My son,



King Seti kneeling before Osiris, with the god Khnum seated behind him, at Seti’s temple in Abydos.

you are still in the vale of illusion." If you had gone to Socrates and asked, "Are you Zeus?" he would have laughed at you. If you had gone to Mohammed and asked, "Are you Allah?" he would first have rent his clothes and then cut off your head. If you had asked Confucius, "Are you heaven?" I think he would have probably replied, "Remarks which are not in accordance with nature are in bad taste." The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is out of the question. In my opinion, the only person who can say that sort of thing is either God or a complete lunatic suffering from that form of delusion which undermines the whole mind of man... He was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three effects: Hatred—Terror—Adoration. There was no

trace of people expressing mild approval.


C.S. Lewis



The fact of Christ Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross opens the world of God to common, born-in-sin folk like you and me. We do not just have His love and grace available to us—we are encompassed by, we are bathed in His forgiving tenderness toward us. His Spirit is our steady, never-disconnected umbilical to God's mind and His encouragement. God's Son, our Savior, is more than just an unflinching Brother while we remain on earth; He sits to the right of His Father as our Advocate, our defender. It is by His blood that all of this is made possible. Because of it, we have very God as our Father. Those who spoke the universe into existence love us—loved us before They set

time in motion.

We are loved, so we love. They loved us first, making it possible for us to love Them in return.

There is no other God like that. 

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us.

1 John 4:15-19

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love
Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above!*

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread His praise from shore to shore!
How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth never, nevermore!
How He watches o'er His loved ones, died to call them all His own;
How for them He intercedeth, watcheth o'er them from the throne!*

*O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the best!
'Tis an ocean full of blessing, 'tis a haven giving rest!
O the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heaven of heavens to me;
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee!*

Samuel Trevor Francis

