

**Testaments of Love, A Study of Love in the Bible,
Leon Morris, Eerdmans/Oxford, 1981; hc., 298 pp.,**

What is love? We write about it and talk about it. But why are there so many unloving people in our world? Has the word love largely lost its meaning and force? "Certainly it is not easy to avoid the conclusion," writes Morris, "that for many of us love has become a refined selfishness, a warm affection for those of whom we approve coupled with a hearty dislike of those of whom we disapprove."

It is widely recognized that Christians emphasize the virtue of love. Yet, there is a dearth of studies on the word love in the Bible. *Testaments of Love* is a much-needed contribution to the discussion on the subject. In this study, Morris carefully examines the Old Testament and the New Testament and also discusses the Septuagint at certain points. Many today view Jehovah of the Old Testament as the deity of wrath. Morris demonstrates that the Old Testament views Jehovah as the one who loves. He asserts that the overriding theme in the Bible is God's love for the completely undeserving. Love cannot be earned. It is unconditional. God loves because it is his nature to love. God is love. Love doesn't exclude punishment or discipline. God strongly opposes evil. Both the love and the wrath of God are taken seriously. Love demands response. It leads to action and service.

Morris writes that God's love is not simply a beautiful but detached emotion; it is a love that pays a price with the cross as its centre. "Without the cross, we would never have known what agape (love) is, let alone have experienced it. But the cross shows us what love meant. There the sinless Son of God laid down his perfect life for sinners, there he died for men without merit. That is agape. It is not a love drawn from God by attractiveness in men; it is the expression of his own innermost nature."

This fine scholarly work, which also contains some technical word studies, is a treasure house of golden nuggets of biblical truths. Heartily recommended!

Dr. Leon Morris served for 15 years as Archbishop of the Sydney diocese, the largest Anglican diocese in the world, and four years as Australian primate of the Church of England. He supports many evangelical causes and was deeply involved in the Australian Billy Graham Crusades. He is a noted New Testament scholar, historian and has authored more than 30 books.

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