

THE POET WITHIN

*Kiss me - full on the mouth!
Yes! For your love is better than wine.
Song of Songs 1:2 (The Message)*

Those who want to reduce the message of the Bible to a set of doctrines and a code of ethics just don't get it! At its most basic level the Bible is a story of love and romance. God is the lover. Sinners like you and me are the pursued. Though we are unworthy and often distracted by our infatuation with other paramours, God just won't give up. Lovers communicate best through poetry. Prose can give us the facts. But romance needs the medium of poetry (spoken and sung) to convey the emotional depths of love. Ever since Miriam took up her tambourine to sing the Song of Redemption (Exodus 15:1-21), God's people have looked to poetry to help them express the reality of being loved by God!

One of the greatest English writers of sacred verse was George Herbert (1593-1633). As an Anglican pastor he discovered that sermons alone were inadequate to express the Gospel. His poems gave worshippers a vocabulary to better enable them to respond to God's grace with wonder, love and praise. One of his most famous poems is titled simply "Love." Let me encourage you to find a quiet corner and read the following words out loud. Then reread them. Then read them again. There is a poet inside your soul who is yearning to express himself! The love of God can set him free. And these words can help you to find a voice for your deepest longings and fears.

*Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.*

*"A guest," I answer'd, "worthy to be here":
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee."
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"*

*"Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "Who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.*