

Love is Life and Life Hath Immortality

BARBARA B. SMITH

Today is Valentine's Day. . . .

A wonderful holiday devoted to thoughts of love, tucked into the middle of a winter month to warm the heart and revitalize the spirit of men and women.

I asked Pat Holland if she had ever received a special valentine from President Holland she would share, and I found that she was born just two days after Valentine's Day, and so he called her his February Sixteenth Valentine. She told me that, when she was about to turn forty, she had all the attendant feelings of reluctance to let go of the twenties and thirties that most women feel until her sweetheart gave her a Lladró Cinderella and said, "You will always be my Cinderella of magical enchantment."

Thank you, Pat. You are enchanting to us too.

Love is Life

I'm glad Valentine's Day is here right in the middle of this foggy February, with all its sweet sentiments, lovely pink and red hearts, and lacy decorated cards. It seems to come when we are most in need of this time to both give and receive some life-renewing, gentle, warming thoughts of love and living.

"Love," Emily Dickinson wrote, "is life, and life hath immortality" (Emily Dickinson, "Love VIII"). Though no one ever really knows exactly what is in the poet's mind, there is a special thought suggested here that is universally recognized as truth. Life without love has a peculiar, haunting quality of resignation and stagnation about it. But love is a force which makes life volatile, and the contagion of it sweeps like wildfire from heart to heart. Where love is, life begets life and love begets love, and in all its compounding there is born a quality of immortality.

For example, think of the very touching scene in the musical *Carnival* in which Lili—the leading lady—is found high upon the diver's platform. She is very discouraged with life and feels so alone that she has determined to jump to her death.

The puppeteer sees her up there. He goes behind the puppet-show stand and opens the curtains and begins to talk to her through his

Barbara B. Smith was president of the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 14 February 1984.

puppets. He talks her down from the dangerous height and charms her over to his stand through the puppets. She talks to them and pours out her lonely heart. “No one loves me,” she says. And the puppets say, “But, Lili, I love you, I love you. I love you, and I love you.” At last Paul comes out and says, “And I love you, Lili.”

And into this poignant setting comes the lovely melody, “Love makes the world go round. Love makes the world go round and round and round.” Round and round, generative into immortality.

A Tender Love Story

Let me share with you one of my favorite and true love stories. I happened into the story very late in its development. One night I went with my husband to a company dinner party. I sat next to an older man who was there with his wife. She had suffered a stroke, and so consequently he would lean over to cut her meat and help her with her food. His manner was tender and very solicitous. As he finished the meal, he turned toward me with a sigh. I said to him, “You are so good to your wife.”

His reply: “Why shouldn’t I be? I love her.”

Then he told me about how they met and about their courtship and their life together. “The first time I saw her,” he said, “was at a party in Canada. She was giving a reading. She had long golden curls and wore a beautiful white eyelet dress with a pretty blue satin sash. I was so taken by her that I told my mother that that was the woman I was going to marry. She laughingly indulged me. I went on my mission, and when I came home she was engaged to another. I was asked to take a special assignment by the bishop, and when I protested he told me that if I would always put the work of the Lord first, I would find that the Lord would always take care of me. I made the long trek to Salt Lake City. When I came home, she had broken her engagement. We started to date and then we married.”

His wife rarely accompanied him in public after that dinner. It wasn’t long until her condition worsened, and she was completely bedridden and virtually unable to speak. He was a General Authority and went out on his regular conference assignments to visit and counsel the Saints. It was his practice to come home and tell her all about the conference. One day as he finished, he teased: “If you are not going to speak back to me, then I am not going to tell about my experiences. You must not love me any more.” Tears welled up in her eyes, and with great effort she rallied enough strength to form the words, “I do love you.” It was laborious and extremely slow, but with great effort she got the words out. He determined he would never again treat their love lightly, for the love they knew transcended even the crippling hindrance of her physical impairment.

At the funeral of this very special woman, Zina Card Brown, every speaker commented on her love both for her sweetheart, President Hugh B. Brown, and for others. Elder Marvin J. Ashton declared: “Some of us are where we are because of her.” President Marion G. Romney said: “Wherever she was, she was a loving lady.” President N. Eldon Tanner declared that President Brown was successful because of her love. President Kimball said that the love of President and Sister Brown was such that they would soon be together everlastingly. Her love pulled them toward immortality—a beginning of eternity.

The Doctor of Lennox

A. J. Cronin wrote about another kind of love when he told of the doctor of Lennox as the most unforgettable character he had ever met. He describes him as “a simple soul who had no wish to dominate an empire, but set out instead to conquer circumstances—and himself.”

Mr. Cronin first knew this doctor as a boy, “small, insignificant, and poor,” who hung on to a select band of adventurous youths in the

town of Levenford in Scotland by the skin of his teeth—barely accepted by them.

The boy was lame—so lame that he had to wear a boot with a sole six inches thick. The minister's son called him "Dot and Carry" for the way he limped along as he ran. That was shortened to "Carry."

Carry was shy, with a smiling, continuing cheerfulness, and this the boys mocked as they ran away from him. Carry's clothes were patched and mended by his mother, "a gaunt little widow of a drunken loafer," who supported herself and her son by scrubbing out shops. Carry supplemented the family income by getting up at five o'clock every morning to deliver milk, and it often made him late for school. The headmaster was more sadistic than sympathetic, and he would embarrass the lad unmercifully—and such public embarrassments brought out Carry's stuttering.

His mother had set her heart on her son's becoming a minister, and so it was that Carry—who would have preferred the out-of-doors in the woods and the moors with the wild things—found himself studying for the ministry. He who had an unusual knack of healing was at last licensed to "cure souls" according to the kirk of Scotland.

But his first public sermon was a disaster. His carefully prepared sermon died as the terrible stammer took hold of him. His poor mother mercifully was taken by an apoplectic seizure, and after the funeral Carry disappeared from Levenford.

Carry drifted to teaching in a wretched school in the mining district. Next he surfaced as a student of medicine at the age of thirty. After his medical training he disappeared again.

At length Mr. Cronin and another of his boyhood friends—now a member of Parliament and a professor of anatomy—went to the Highlands for a holiday of fishing in the little town of Lennox.

Let me quote now from Mr. Cronin's article:

The food at our inn was vile and the landlady a scrawny shrew. It was something of a satisfaction when, two days after our arrival, she slipped on the taproom floor and damaged her kneecap. Perfunctorily, we two renegades from the healing art offered our assistance. But the dame would have none of us. No one would suit her but her own village doctor, of whose skill and notable achievements she drew such an enthusiastic picture that my friend glanced at me and smiled.

An hour later the practitioner arrived, black bag in hand, with all the quick assurance of a busy man. In no time he had silenced the patient with a reassuring word and reduced the dislocation with a sure, deft touch. Only then did he turn toward us. . . . It was Carry. But not the shy, shabby, stammering Carry of old. He had the quietly confident air of a man established and secure. In a flash of recognition he greeted us warmly, and pressed us to come to supper at his home. Meanwhile, he had an urgent case to attend.

The two men went to his home with an "odd expectancy." They found Carry had a wife "fresh and pretty as her own countryside." There were children also, two girls and a little boy.

Downstairs Carry joined us with two other guests. Now, at his own table, he was a man poised and serene, holding his place as host with quiet dignity. His friends, both men of substance, treated him with deference. Less from what he said than what was said by others, we gathered the facts. His practice was wide and scattered. His patients were country folk, canny, silent, hard to know. Yet somehow he had won them. Now as he went through the village the women would run to him, babes in arms, to consult him in the roadway. Such times he never bothered about fees. More than enough came his way, and at New Year there was always a string of presents on his doorstep, a brace of ducks, a goose, a clutch of new-laid eggs, in handsome settlement for some quite forgotten service.

But there were other tales—of midnight vigils when in some humble home the battle for human life was waged: a child, choking with diphtheria; a plowman stricken with pneumonia; a shepherd’s wife in painful labor—all to be sustained, comforted, exhorted, brought back haltingly, their hands in his, from the shadows.

The doctor was a force now, permeating the whole countryside, wise and gentle, blending the best of science and nature, unsparing, undemanding, loving this work he had been born to do. Conscious of the place that he had won in the affections of the people, a man who had refused defeat and won through to victory at last. [A. J. Cronin, “The Doctor of Lennox,” Reader’s Digest Twentieth-Anniversary Anthology, 1941]

Love was life for Carry. His love literally meant life to others and for him a renewed life.

Giving and Receiving Love

There is something in the love that President Brown offered to his wife and she gave back to him that is very like the love the doctor of Lennox offered the people of his Scottish town and the love they gave back to him. Both first gave and then received love.

It is this love of which the scriptures speak. It is the eternal life-giving force, which permeates the universe and governs the heavens and the earth. It makes the weak strong and lifts people over and through the great boulders of difficulties which fall in our paths from time to time.

During the last week of his earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ was approached for the third time by the Pharisees in an attempt to confound him. One of them—a lawyer—asked:

Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. [Matthew 22:36–40]

Love One Another

This is the same teaching that has been given in each dispensation. Over and over again in every period of time, the Lord has repeated this core instruction to his children. Sometimes he says, “If you do not have love, then it doesn’t matter what else you know or do.” At other times he says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” But always he stresses that the very heart of the gospel is to love God and man. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

After spending a lifetime studying and writing about men and events, Will Durant, the famous historian, was ninety-two when he was asked by a reporter what he could say that would distill more than two thousand years of history into one simple sentence.

The message Mr. Durant chose was “Love one another. My final lesson of history is the same as that of Jesus.”

Durant added with a laugh, “You may think that’s a lot of lollipop but just try it. Love is the most practical thing in the world. If you take an attitude of love toward everybody you meet, you’ll eventually get along” (Pam Proctor, “Durants on History from the Ages, with Love,” *Parade*, 6 August 1978, p. 12).

It is interesting to read the references to love in the scriptures and to find that the Lord explains that to love God is simply to do good and kind things to his children. The way the Lord explains how to love another is actively to do good to all.

Could it mean then that you should seek those new students right here at BYU “who hunger and thirst” for friendship? A smile? A cheery hello? Catching up and walking to class

with another student who happens to be going your way?

Could there be those here who have less than desirable circumstances in their lives as they struggle to obtain their education? Could you reach out to them? Could you take the time to really know each other in your family home evening groups, know them individually, their wants, and needs, and goals? Could you be responsive to them?

Could the prison of which Christ speaks be walls of one's own making that would crumble with your kind words or listening ears?

Could a thoughtful note be sent to those who make the grounds beautiful, have facilities clean and ready for meetings—security, Food Services, or those who are employed by Personnel? Could a word about your eagerness to learn be conveyed to your teachers? Perhaps it could mean the difference between routine or royal presentations.

If you would give love, you must be appreciative, long-suffering, patient, kind, humble.

And what are the qualities you need if you receive love? Openness, receptivity, vulnerability, and humility.

Are they practical? Can we really incorporate all of the laws of love given by Jesus in today's world? It's a question often asked. The answer is an individual commitment of faith and love. These commandments are practical day-to-day guides to our behavior if we will determine to make our own actions conform to them.

Love Unlooses Great Powers

Really loving people hasn't been tried very often in the world of international relations, and it's rare even in the world of national affairs. But at least one very notable experience comes to mind. Gandhi was the man who led India to her independence. Many have seen the film recently made of his life.

Remember how he began to realize that turning the other cheek and doing good for

hateful deeds would unloose great powers for his people? One distraught Moslem man came to him in his suffering. His son had been killed by the Hindus; in retaliation he took the life of a small Hindu boy. Heavyhearted, he sought relief from Gandhi. And Gandhi told him he could find comfort if he would find an orphaned Hindu boy and raise him as his own . . . only he was to raise him as a Hindu—not as a Moslem. There is a sacrificing in love—a sacrificing that brings immortality. Gandhi suffered a great deal, but ultimately millions of people were granted more freedom. Only the assassin's bullet cut his life short. One wonders what he might have contributed further to sacrifice and vulnerability in the development of the new nation had he lived.

Love and Serve His Children

One evening, as I conversed with President Harold B. Lee, I said to him, "President Lee, you seem different somehow."

He smiled and said, "You know what it is, don't you?" I shook my head and said that I really didn't know. Then he shared with me this remarkable experience, saying:

"After I became the President of the Church, I thought a great deal about what the Lord wanted me to do. One night, while I was sleeping, President McKay came to me in a dream. He pointed his finger and looked at me with those piercing eyes of his, as only President McKay could do, and he said, 'If you would serve the Lord, you must love and serve his children.' I awakened with a compelling desire to learn all I could about love that I might serve the Lord."

He went on to say, "After I had read everything the scriptures had to say about love, I began to put into practice all that I had gleaned from my study. That's what you can feel. It is my newfound ability to truly love and serve his children."

I watched President Lee a little more closely that night and noted that not one person who

came to the table to shake his hand left without receiving a special word of encouragement or an extra question that indicated the concern of the Prophet. No one went away without seeing his smile or hearing his words of love.

I have thought of his wonderful example many times as the years have come and gone. President Lee is not with us now, but the spirit of that love which he exemplified still lives in my memory. He has helped me to understand what Orson Pratt meant when he said, “The Children of Zion love in proportion to the heavenly knowledge which they have received; for love keeps pace with knowledge, and as the one increases so does the other; and when knowledge is perfected, love will be perfected also” (“Celestial Marriage,” *The Seer*, October 1853, p. 156). We see this process, also, in the life of our beloved Prophet Spencer W. Kimball. Love was part of his life long before he became the President of the Church.

“I Love People”

A stake president in Logan, Utah, kept a guest book, and after he passed away, that book was given to his son. When the son thumbed through the pages, he was very impressed with the signatures that were there. Most of the General Authorities had signed the book. One entry he saw was:

Name: Spencer W. Kimball

Date: 1954

Position or title: Apostle

Hobby: “I love people.”

He thumbed through many more pages, and then he saw an almost identical entry ten years later:

Name: Spencer W. Kimball

Date: 1964

Position: Apostle

Hobby: “I love people.”

We all know President Kimball is a man of love. He thinks of love as a way to overcome even unknown offenses. Such an incident occurred with one of his neighbors who would go out and talk to President Kimball whenever he saw him in the yard. Then one day the neighbor’s wife said, “You mustn’t do that. The only time President Kimball is alone is when he is in the yard, and then you go over and impose yourself upon him.”

After that the neighbor stayed in and just watched President Kimball through the window. A few weeks passed before President Kimball rang the doorbell of the neighbor and handed him a casserole.

“What’s this for?” the neighbor asked.

“I don’t know,” replied President Kimball. “I’ve come to make amends for whatever I’ve done to offend you. You never come and talk to me any more, so I decided I must have done something wrong.”

It is President Kimball who has lovingly explained to us that the Lord whispers to our hearts to go and do, and in this way he answers the fervent prayers of others. President Kimball says the Lord has chosen this method of answering prayers because he knows it is the way we will learn most effectively to give love.

Compassionate Service

I feel certain that such was the case cited by President S. Dilworth Young in his memorable address entitled, “By Love, Serve One Another.”

“Once,” President Young said, “when I was responsible for an invalid [it was his first wife], a good woman announced, ‘I am coming to your house every Friday night from six until ten. You can count on it, so plan to go at six and find relief for those four hours.’ How blessed she was to me! How good! She blessed both me and the invalid by new cheer, new smiles, new ideas.”

Another example came to me in my office by way of a letter from the Medford Oregon Stake, which I will quote:

I always thought I knew what compassionate service was. I've heard enough about it, and I've been involved in it myself from time to time. I even introduced young girls to it and watched with pleasure how it changed their lives. I never thought it was . . . a big deal when I was asked to help taking in meals, tending children, doing something to help. I often felt guilty reporting any compassionate service hours because it seemed as if I had done so little, and usually I received happiness from it.

Fifteen months ago I was stricken with a muscle degenerating disease, and I have spent eleven and a half months as a hospital patient. Now compassionate service means so much to me. Oh, believe me, it's no little thing . . . for the "little" things that people do for others are generally mountainous to the receiver. Compassionate service means love to me now.

It is the hug and kiss from the tender heart of one who hasn't seen you for some time, who truly misses you. It's the one who can't control her tears when she sees you in pain. Compassionate service is the love of one who senses your need for companionship, so she sits quietly and holds your hand until you fall asleep. It's the one who telephones on her lunch hour just to say, "I love you, and I'm praying for you." Oh, yes, and it's the one who brings you a bulletin from church each week because she knows how lonesome you are for those brothers and sisters you love.

Compassionate service that used to be such a small thing now is one of the biggest things in my day. Having someone stay with me each day for a period of time often makes the sisters feel guilty if I don't have something for them to do. You see, they don't have any idea how much just being with them means to me. I know they put off duties, sometimes even urgent ones, just to listen when I need to talk. They come to see me faithfully and bring so much cheerfulness into the room that it's impossible to be discouraged. Their compassionate service includes "little" things like being alert enough to help me move my legs when it's an obvious struggle, with-

out making me ask for help. That saves me some of my self-respect. It's also using a tissue to dry my tears and then pretending not to even notice the tears. Again, that often helps me keep my self-respect. Then on other occasions, it comes in the gentle persuasion that lets me cry and get it all out.

See what small, insignificant things make up compassionate service? Small and insignificant? Only to the loving one on the giving end. I speak from experience when I say there's nothing small about the love that accompanies compassionate service to the receiver.

The compassionate service which is rendered is the evidence of things not seen. It means that we actually believe in the teachings of Jesus. Since its beginning, Relief Society has tried to carry out the sacred charge to do the work that Jesus did, and so the Relief Society story is a story of love with a myriad of instances of organized compassionate service throughout the wards and branches, stakes and districts of the Church.

I was recently made aware of two visiting teachers who did all of the grocery shopping for an invalid sister for over a year. Then when she needed to have her blood pressure taken daily, they assumed the responsibility willingly.

In another ward the Relief Society sisters were organized to supplement the time that the husband was out of the home and unable to care for his wife, a native of Thailand, whose English language skills were very limited. She had a disease that attacked every organ of her body. The sisters learned to use the respirator. They bathed her, combed her hair, brushed her teeth, and cleaned her house and prepared her meals as well. I heard this woman cry words of gratitude for the love and patience of those who served her.

A Force for Good

But often the love of Relief Society sisters goes beyond the fundamental caring for the

individual, as it does when young Relief Society sisters trained here at BYU become a force for good throughout the world. I have seen former student Relief Society officers and teachers in positions of leadership and service throughout the Church—here in the center stakes of Zion and in some far away corners of the earth.

In these leadership roles they are carrying out the great traditions of our sisterhood. They are living the motto of Relief Society, “Charity never faileth.” In reality they are tending to the needs of those they serve.

After the first year of the Relief Society’s existence, Eliza R. Snow, the secretary, wrote: “We hope the ladies of the society will feel encouraged to renew their exertions, knowing that the blessings of the poor are resting upon them. We feel assured from what has passed under our personal observation, that many during the inclemency of the winter were not only relieved, but preserved from famishing through their instrumentality. More has been accomplished than our most sanguine anticipations predicted, and through the assistance and blessings of God, what may we not hope for the future?” (*Times and Seasons* 4:287).

We now are in that future of which they spoke. The work of love in that one little band of women is being carried forth in ten thousand bands of women in 82 countries. Like those sisters before, they are teaching the concepts of love and of charity and urging individuals to give love.

They are organizing long-term programs of assistance to each other as need arises and giving sustenance to neighbors, and they are teaching the life-giving concepts.

Early in my administration, a Relief Society group from one of the BYU wards came to my office and presented me with a long scroll on which were listed the names of those who had completed the New Testament, the adult scripture reading course for that year. That Relief Society unit had determined that they would

not only commit themselves to completing the Church reading assignment; they would live it and make it a part of their lives. They wept as they told me that one girl who wanted very much to participate was blind, and so each member of their Relief Society unit took a turn reading the scriptures to her so that she could participate in the project.

Another girl became ill, and so they all helped her keep up with her class assignments so that she could do that and read the scriptures as well.

They identified a second list and said so many problems came up that this group was not able to finish the scripture reading by the date they had set, but they said, “You can be assured that they will complete it and that they are living what they are learning.”

The Love Which Jesus Taught Us

There is great value in combining the efforts of Relief Society members to go beyond theory into life-enriching experiences.

The love which makes the world have life is the love which Jesus taught us. It creates life in marriages. Life in families. Life in neighborhoods, communities, nations, and the world. We must love the Lord, trust in his word, love and trust in immortality.

The little things we do for each other brings tenderness and joy into our day-to-day lives. They make life worth living.

The loving things we do for those who have spitefully used us bring even more love into our lives. They stop the perpetuation of hate and add to the component of good. The power of love is generative.

I think my young son understood this when he was only three.

One morning I stepped to our back door to see the children off to school. Our little three-year-old son followed the children to the edge of the yard and watched them as they cut across the grass of a newly moved-in neighbor. Enraged, the neighbor called out, “Don’t you

kids ever cut across my lawn; don't you dare step one foot on it again." He couldn't see me, but I could surely hear him, and so could every other mother that was out to see her child off to school.

As sweetly as three-year-olds can talk, ours turned to this angry neighbor and said, "You can step on our lawn if you want to." The next day that neighbor came out with a big smile and a darling teddy bear, and gave it to our little son. There was never again a problem over that lawn.

Receive love. Let others step on our lawn. Open ourselves to receive another.

Give Us the Perfect Way

Perhaps you will remember the story of Corrie ten Boom, a fifty-year-old spinster who became a militant heroine of the anti-Nazi underground during World War II. The book is called *The Hiding Place*. It describes "an extraordinary adventure in Christian courage." Certainly I found it to be just that.

I would like to share with you two examples of how love worked in her life to help her do good when she had been extremely ill used.

The first time was when she was a young woman in Holland. She was very much in love and had thought her love was returned. But then one day the young man came to her door with another young woman. He wanted to introduce Corrie to his fiancée. The family rallied around to help her face this crisis. After the young couple left, Corrie fled to her bedroom where she lay sobbing. Then she writes:

Later, I heard father's footsteps coming up the stairs. For a moment I was a little girl again waiting for him to tuck the blankets tight. But this was a hurt that no blanket could shut out, and suddenly I was afraid of what father would say. . . . Of course he did not say the false, idle words.

"Corrie," he began instead, "Do you know what hurts so very much? It's love. Love is the strongest

force in the world, and when it is blocked that means pain.

"There are two things we can do when this happens. We can kill the love so that it stops hurting. But then of course part of us dies, too. Or, Corrie, we can ask God to open up another route for that love to travel. . . . Whenever we cannot love in the old, human way, Corrie, God can give us the perfect way."

Later, after the terrifying experiences of a wartime Nazi concentration camp, she found herself face to face with one of the S.S. guards.

It was at a church service in Munich. He was the man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time.

And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, her sister Betsie's pain-blانched face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulien," he said. "To think that as you say, he has washed my sins away!"

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? "Jesus," I prayed, "forgive me and help me to forgive him."

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. "Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness."

As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from

me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

*And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on his. When he tells us to love our enemies, he gives, along with the command, love itself. [Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1972), pp. 44-45, 238]*

Her Thoughtful Ways

I've known great love in my marriage, with my children, and as the president of the Relief Society, and I grew up in a loving family who looked forward to the occasional visits of one of my mother's older cousins whom we called Aunt Lillian. She had been a teacher in the public school system for more than thirty years. We were entranced as we listened to her tell of the problems she had as a teacher with disruptive students and of those in the school system who made a great impact for good upon the life she lived alone.

One day she invited me to her apartment to help her entertain the young daughter of a schoolteacher friend. Everything was meticulously prepared for us—the food she served and all of her surroundings. Her thoughtful ways evidenced a life-style of noble living. I was deeply impressed with the love she showed both of us that day, and it continued year after year for me.

When she was seventy years old, she bought her first car, a beautiful, brand-new blue Plymouth, and she took driving lessons. When she got her license, she decided to drive to California to visit her sister and invited me to go along to keep her company. I was then about twelve years old. I was so excited. I'd only been to Wyoming and felt that if I went to California, I'd become a world traveler. However, because she was such an inexperienced driver, I saw very little other than the road and other cars and was frightened most of

the time. But we arrived safely and enjoyed our time with the family members I hadn't known before.

She always gave so much of herself to make me happy. This giving continued on through my growing years and even when I married. Doug and I decided to name our second daughter after her. Her love was showered upon me and upon all my children. At Christmastime she would bring them lovely gifts. She knew the value of good books and beautiful flowers and people. She often tended my children and gave them a love for these things. All those years I was the recipient of her love. And the day came when I was able to have her with us, do for her, and ease some of her lonely hours. I received so much—more love and enrichment to my life because of her.

That, you see, is what love is. It is the investiture, the immersing ourselves in the lives of others and watching that change us and our surroundings.

Because of her I know that love is the life-giving force which renews the spirit of men and women and brings a new life to the world, a life that brings a longing for immortality.

She helped me understand the French scientist, Teilhard de Chardin, who is quoted as saying: "Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love: and then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire." How wondrous!

On this day of love may each one of us think of love as the great and powerful force that it is. May we take his teachings about love very literally and work at mastering the skill of giving and receiving love. Love is the force by which *we* can renew the world. "Love is life, and life hath immortality." I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, whose love is wondrous. Amen.