

# THE LOVE OF GOD TO US

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

*“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other  
creature, shall be able to separate  
us from the love of God, which is  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  
—Romans 8:39*

**B**Y “us” we mean His people. Although we read of the love “which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:39), Holy Writ knows nothing of a love of God *outside* of Christ. “The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all his works” (Psa 145:9), so that He provides the ravens with food. “He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luk 6:35), and His providence ministers unto the just and the unjust (Mat 5:45). But His *love* is reserved for His elect. That is unequivocally established by its characteristics, for the attributes of His love are identical with Himself. Necessarily so, for “God is love” (1Jo 4:16).

## **The love of God in Christ**

In making that postulate it is but another way to say God’s love is like Himself, from everlasting to everlasting—immutable.

Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that anyone beloved of God can eternally perish or shall ever experience His everlasting vengeance. Since the love of God is “in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:39), it was attracted by nothing in its objects—nor can it be repelled by anything in, of, or by them.

“Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (Joh 13:1). The “world” in John 3:16 is a general term used in contrast with the Jews, and the verse must be interpreted so as not to contradict Psalms 5:5; 6:7; John 3:36; and Romans 9:13.

The chief design of God is to commend the love of God in Christ, for He is the sole channel through which it flows. The Son has not induced the Father to love His people, but rather was it His love for them which moved Him to give His Son for them. Ralph Erskine (1685-1752) said,

“God hath taken a marvelous way to manifest His love. When He would show His power, He makes a world. When He would display His wisdom, He puts it in a frame and form that discovers its vastness. When He would manifest the grandeur and glory of His name, He makes a heaven, and puts angels and archangels, principalities and powers therein. And when He would manifest His love, what will He not do? God hath

taken a great and marvelous way of manifesting it in Christ: His person, His blood, His death, His righteousness.”

“All the promises of God in him [Christ] are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God” (2Co 1:20). As we were chosen in Christ (Eph 1:4), as we were accepted in Him (Eph 1:6), as our life is hid in Him (Col 3:3), so are we beloved in Him—the love of God which is in Christ Jesus”: in Him as our Head and Husband, which is why nothing can separate us therefrom, for that union is indissoluble.

### God’s love to the saints

Nothing so warms the heart of the saint as a spiritual contemplation of God’s love. As he is occupied with it, he is lifted outside of and above his wretched self. A believing apprehension fills the renewed soul with holy satisfaction and makes him as happy as it is possible for one to be this side of heaven. To know and believe the love that God has toward me is both an earnest<sup>1</sup> and a foretaste of heaven itself.

Since God loves His people in Christ, it is not for any *amiableness* in or attraction about them: “Jacob have I loved” (Rom 9:13). Yes, the naturally unattractive; yes, the despicable Jacob—“thou worm Jacob” (Isa 41:14). Since God loves His people in Christ, it is not regulated by their *fruitfulness*, but is the same at all times. Because He loves them *in* Christ, the Father loves them *as* Christ. The time will come when His prayer will be answered, “that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Joh 17:23). Only faith can grasp those marvelous things, for neither reasoning nor feelings can do so.

God loves us in Christ. What infinite delight the Father has as He beholds His people in His dear Son! All our blessings flow from that precious fountain!

God’s love to His people is not of yesterday. It did not begin with their love to Him. No, “we love him, because he first loved us” (1Jo 4:19). We do not first give to Him that He may return to us again. Our regeneration is not the motive of His love, rather His love is the reason why He renews us after His image. This is often made to appear in the first manifestation of it, when so far from its objects being engaged in seeking Him, they are at their worst!

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the LORD GOD, and thou becamest [manifestatively] mine” (Eze 16:8).

Not only are its objects often at their worst when God’s love is first revealed to them, but actually doing their worst, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. Not only is God’s love antecedent to ours, but also it was borne in His heart toward us long before we were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of His dear Son. It began not in time, but bears the date of eternity. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jer 31:3).

---

<sup>1</sup> earnest – surety; down payment.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation<sup>2</sup> for our sins” (1Jo 4:10). It is clear from those words that God loved His people while they were in a state of nature, destitute of all grace, without a particle of love towards Him or faith in Him; yes, while they were His enemies (Rom 5:8, 10). Clearly that lays me under a thousand times greater obligation to love, serve, and glorify Him than had He loved me for the first time when my heart was won. All the acts of God to His people in time are the expressions of the love He bore them from eternity. It is because God loves us in Christ, and has done so from everlasting, that the gifts of His love are irrevocable. They are the bestowal of “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jam 1:17). The love of God indeed makes a change in us when it is “shed abroad in our hearts” (Rom 5:5), but it makes none in Him. He sometimes varies the dispensations<sup>3</sup> of His providence toward us, but that is not because His affection has altered. Even when He chastens us, it is in love (Heb 12:6), since He has our good in view.

### **The operations of God’s love**

Let us look more closely at some of the operations of God’s love. First, in *election*. “We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit [His quickening] and belief of the truth” (2Th 2:13). There is an infallible connection between God’s love and His selection of those who were to be saved. That election is the consequence of His love is clear again from Deuteronomy: “The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people” (7:7). So again: “In love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph 1:4-5).

Second, in *redeeming*. As we have seen from 1 John 4:10, out of His sovereign love God made provision for Christ to render satisfaction for their sins, though prior to their conversion He was angry with them in respect to His violated Law. And “how shall he not with him also freely give us *all things*?” (Rom 8:32)—another clear proof that His Son was not “delivered up” to the cross for all mankind. For He gives them neither the Holy Spirit, a new nature, nor repentance and faith.

Third, *effectual* calling. From the enthroned Saviour the Father sends forth the Holy Spirit (Act 2:33). Having loved His elect with an everlasting love, with lovingkindness He draws them (Jer 31:3), quickens into newness of life, calls them out of darkness into His marvelous light, makes them His children. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1Jo 3:1). If filiation<sup>4</sup> does not issue from God’s love as a sure effect, to what purpose are those words?

Fourth, *healing of backsliding*: “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely” (Hos 14:4), without reluctance or hesitation. “Many waters cannot quench love,

---

<sup>2</sup> **propitiation** – an appeasement; a sacrifice that turns away wrath.

<sup>3</sup> **dispensations** – God’s arrangement of events by divine rule and care.

<sup>4</sup> **filiation** – sonship.

neither can the floods drown it” (Song 8:7). Such is God’s love to His people—invincible, unquenchable. Not only is there no possibility of its expiring, but also the black waters of backsliding cannot extinguish it, nor the floods of unbelief put it out.

Nothing is more irresistible than death in the natural world, nothing so invincible as the love of God in the realm of grace. Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) remarked:

“What difficulties does the love of God overcome! For God to overcome His own heart! Do you think it was nothing for Him to put His Son to death?...When He came to call us, had He no difficulties that love overcame? We were dead in trespasses and sins, yet from the great love wherewith He loved us, He quickened us in the grave of our corruption: ‘lo, he stinketh’ (Joh 11:39)—even then did God come and conquer us. After our calling, how sadly do we provoke God! Such temptations that if it were possible the elect should be deceived (Mat 24:24). It is so with all Christians. No righteous man is but *scarcely* saved (1Pe 4:18), and yet saved he *is*, because the love of God is invincible: it overcomes all difficulties.

An application is hardly necessary for such a theme. Let God’s love daily engage your mind by devout meditations on it, so that the affections of your heart may be drawn out to Him. When cast down in spirit or in sore straits,<sup>5</sup> plead His love in prayer, assured that it cannot deny anything good for you. Make God’s wondrous love to you the incentive of your obedience to Him—gratitude requires nothing less.



© Copyright 2000 Chapel Library: annotations. Permission is expressly granted to reproduce this material by any means, provided 1) you do not charge beyond a nominal sum for cost of duplication; 2) this copyright notice and all the text on this page are included.

Chapel Library is a faith ministry that relies entirely upon God’s faithfulness. We therefore do not solicit donations, but we gratefully receive support from those who freely desire to give. Chapel Library does not necessarily agree with all the doctrinal positions of the authors it publishes.

**Worldwide**, please download material without charge from our website, or contact the international distributor as listed there for your country. In **North America**, for additional copies of this booklet or other Christ-centered materials from prior centuries, please contact

CHAPEL LIBRARY  
2603 West Wright Street  
Pensacola, Florida 32505 USA

Phone: (850) 438-6666 • Fax: (850) 438-0227  
[chapel@mountzion.org](mailto:chapel@mountzion.org) • [www.chapellibrary.org](http://www.chapellibrary.org)

---

<sup>5</sup> **straits** – bad situations; from “narrow place.”