

# God Loved the World

*The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell.  
It goes beyond the highest star.  
And reaches to the deepest hell.*

So wrote F. H. Lehman, and his sentiments spring up before anyone who would seek to write upon this wonderful subject. We can never make too much of God's love, but oh, how easily we may understate it!

The inspired statement of the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:8 sets before us some glorious truths about God's love for the world: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

## **God's love was directed toward sinners.**

That may not sound startling to those who know little of their own sinfulness or of God's holiness. But perhaps you could think of someone whose crime against a child or an elderly person was so brutal and cruel as to make all who hear about it loathe him. Then consider that sin has rendered all of us vile in God's sight. Well may He loathe us, but He does not. On the contrary, He loves sinners!

The word *sinner* means one devoted to sin, one who loves and serves sin. As sinners, we are the very opposite to all that God is, for "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Psalm 11:7). God loves all that we as sinners do not love. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). How different is God! "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). See

then what a gulf God's love spanned when it reached to sinful men.

Many foolishly think that God loves only those who are good and righteous. That would mean in practice that God would love no one. Why? Because, there is not one who is righteous in God's sight, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God's Son said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). It was the lost He came to seek (Luke 19:10) because God loves sinners.

## **God has given us an exhibition of His love.**

The word *commendeth* in Romans 5:8 is one that carries the meaning of exhibiting or putting on display. We are much better at learning and understanding something by seeing a demonstration of it than we are by merely reading about it. A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. God has given us a picture of His love. We have no excuse for not understanding its greatness, its glory. The death of Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, for sinners is a bright and vivid picture of the love of God.

He died even for those who were directly guilty of His death. Peter, addressing a crowd in Jerusalem just after the crucifixion of Christ, said to them, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). No one contradicted him! A few days later he said something similar: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10).

Many of these people, directly guilty of the evil crucifixion of the Saviour, were converted. Their sins were forgiven and they were reconciled to God freely through the atoning blood of the One whom they killed. Is that not love?

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The title given to the Saviour here in our verse reminds us of the work that the Lord Jesus came into this world to undertake. The name *Christ* means the "anointed One." He was anointed of the Father to undertake the role of Redeemer. He came to take upon Himself the sins of His people, His sheep, and to die on the cross in their place. He was the sinner's substitute.

So, in truth, He died at the hands of those whom He had loved and had come to deliver from sin. Is this not love?

Well has John 3:16 spoken of this love: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's love procured the salvation of those for whom Christ died.

# the World

Such is the love of God for sinners that it effected their salvation. I mean by that, that God's love resulted in deliverance from sin and entrance into everlasting bliss for those He loved.

We are all well acquainted with the kind of love that is often frustrated and forced to admit defeat. Many people have set their love on someone or something and yet despite their best efforts to obtain what they loved, it eluded them. Not so God!

Those upon whom God's love rested and for whom Christ died, will enter into the full enjoyment of the benefits of being loved by God. Christ's death purchased eternal life for those for whom Christ died. He cried on the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30), and indeed it was. Christ purchased eternal life for His people with his own blood.

## May I know God's love?

The question now remains: May I enter into the benefits of God's love? The answer is straightforward. Yes, you may. In presenting you with a picture of His love for sinners, God would have you respond to His love with a melted, broken heart over your sinful rebellion against Him.

Christ called men unto Himself during the years of His earthly ministry with the words "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). That invitation still stands today. You have but to come to Christ, drawn by His love, and He will receive you. ■

Rev. Ivan Foster is the minister of Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church.

He has been a pioneer of the Christian school movement in Northern Ireland and is a *Let the Bible Speak* radio preacher. He is the editor of *The Burning Bush*, a monthly Protestant news digest.

