

TRANSCENDENT LOVE

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I John 4:8-10.

"God is love." What a simple statement! It is one of the shortest sentences ever written, but at the same time it is one of the most profound and sublime. It is the keynote of the entire Bible. It is inexhaustible in its meaning.

There cannot be any experimental or practical knowledge of the love of God except through the Son of God in Whom it is revealed and the Word of God in which it is recorded. The love of God was never known fully until Christ revealed it and the Bible recorded it.

I. The Proof of Transcendent Love.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world." If you want to be assured that there is a God of love, a God Who cares, a God Who is seeking to save sinful people, you must turn to the Christ of the New Testament. In no one else do you find that "God is love." Since Christ alone reveals the God of love, we should know what He has to say about God's transcendent love.

Love is the very essence of the nature and being of God. God's love is altogether different from human love. Men love because they recognize in the object of their affection something that is lovable. But God's love arises out of His own nature. Like some clear fountain, springing up out of the earth, there wells up constantly and forever from the heart of God the love which is Himself. He loves us, not because we love Him, but because He is God.

God's love is universal. Therefore, we do not need to question as to whether or not we deserve God's love. No conscious unworthiness need ever make us falter in the least in our grasp of the great truth that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Perhaps this is the greatest statement that has been made about God. When love is left out it is impossible to understand God.

God's love is universal. It pours forth its blessed beams, not on a favored few, but on the whole wide world. He does not love just a select few. He does not love the rich and despise the poor, or vice versa. He does not love the learned and ignore the unlearned. He loves all men. None need perish if they will only believe on Christ.

God's love is unchanging. Human love is often fickle. Even human friendships are broken frequently. God's love is unchangeable because He does not change. He still loves us in spite of our waywardness. His love did not have any birthday. It has never had a changing day. It will never have a dying day. Human hate cannot kill it. Human sin cannot kill it. You cannot be bad enough to make God quit loving you. Christ never hated Judas Iscariot or Pontius Pilate. He never had any hatred for His murderers, for He was God, and "God is love." A soul can never drift far enough to be outside the circle of the love of God, nor fall so deep into sin as to be beyond the reach of God's love.

God's love is unfailing. His love is infinite, inexpressible, incomprehensible, immeasurable, inexhaustible and illimitable. When we stumble into sin, God's love forgives. When reversals come to us, God's love strengthens us. When sorrow comes, God's love comforts. It is impossible to measure the love of God for us.

God's love is eternal in its duration. He said, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." His love will never cease. "Love is a golden chain, one end of which is fixed to God's throne in eternity past, and the other end to His throne in eternity to come. This love of God is a bond not to be dissolved, a union never to be broken, a depth which cannot be fathomed, a height which can never be scaled, a length which can never be traversed, a breadth which cannot be measured, a science which passeth all knowledge, a fire which many waters cannot quench, a flame which the floods cannot drown."

II. The Purpose of Transcendent Love.

"God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." God loved in order that we might live. God expressed His love in the matchless gift of His Son. Christ's coming into this world did not originate God's love, but it certainly did reveal it. Christ died for us because God loved us. The real purpose which God had for sending His only begotten Son into the world was that we might have life through Him.

The life which Christ gives is filled with peace, joy, power, beauty and glory. It is abundant, abounding and overflowing life. It is truly a satisfying life. Only eternal life can ever satisfy the longings of the human soul. Eternal life is full and complete. All other life is partial, fragmentary and incomplete. Eternal life is endless. Let us thank our God for life that is not only infinite in its quality but endless in its duration and satisfying in its content.

III. The Product of Transcendent Love.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." We are not saved because Christ preached the love of God, but because He propitiated our sins.

Inasmuch as we have been the recipients of God's love, we ought also to love one another. Our love for one another is simply God's love flowing into and through us. Christians are to love those who are God's children, even though some of them may be unlovely. God loved them and so ought we. Moreover, we must love those who are not saved and seek to persuade them to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.