

God Loves You



William Pearce

God Loves You

An Exposition of John 3:16

By William P. Pearce

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.

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1. The Lover – God

To know God is the highest and noblest aspiration of the soul. “I have always,” sang Robert Browning, “had one lode-star; now as I look back, I see that I have halted or hastened as I looked toward that star – a need, a trust, a yearning after God.”

It is only through love that we learn to know God. Classic Greece and Rome are called by those who knew them best, “a world without love,” while the uncivilized Algonkins had no such word till the missionary who translated the Bible into their tongue invented one. But our language and Bible teach it, and we believe, as Lord Tennyson wrote, “Through the will of the One who knows and rules, utter knowledge is but utter love.”

Some people tell us that we cannot know God. Blessed be His name, we can. When Phillips Brooks told the deaf, blind, and dumb Helen Keller, as a child, that God was her Heavenly Father, she answered: “I knew that before. I think I have always known it.”

Lord Kelvin, better known as Sir William Thomson, said, “Forty years ago, walking somewhere in the country, I asked Liebig if he believed that the grass and the flowers which he saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, ‘No! No more than I would believe that a book of botany, describing them, could grow by mere chemical forces.’”

Henry Ward Beecher had a celestial globe in his study. On it was an excellent representation of the constellations and the stars which compose them. Robert G. Ingersoll, the atheist lawyer, saw the

apparatus and was delighted with it. After examining it closely, he said, "It's just what I want. Who made it?"

"Who made it?" Beecher replied facetiously. "Why, nobody made it, Colonel. It just happened!"

"Show me your God," demanded the Emperor Trajan of Joshua, a Jewish rabbi.

"Come out of the house and see one of His ambassadors," replied the sage.

Leading the emperor into an open space, the rabbi bade him look upon the sun, then shining in his strength. "What! Can you not look in the face of the ambassador?" he asked. "Are you blinded by his dazzling presence? How, then, can you look upon the countenance of the King?"

God is everywhere, and His name is written upon all His works. His majesty is seen in the towering mountain and the mighty ocean; His love shines in every flower and dewdrop; His voice is heard in the storm; and His glory is depicted on the variegated landscape, in the lightning flash, and in the magnificent aurora.

"This world's no blot for us, nor blank. It means intensely, and means good."

If the Arabian guide crossing the desert of Sahara with a French scientist saw in the sinking sun the wisdom and glory of the Creator; if Galileo saw in the construction of a wheat straw that lay on his prison floor the work of an intelligent Maker; if Coleridge, when standing before Mont Blanc, uncovered his head in reverence to its Creator; if Jenny Lind fell upon her knees and gave thanks to God when she first saw Niagara; and if – "To blind old Milton's rayless orbs, A light divine is given; And deaf Beethoven hears the

hymns And harmonies of heaven,” – surely we, who walk through fields of golden grain, and sit beneath trees laden with luscious fruit, and drink from the sweet, gurgling springs, must be blind and deaf if we perceive not God’s love!

“All nature speaks the attributes of God, whose vast domain of matter and of mind accords forever with His holy will. All life is an expression of His love.”

God is Fatherly love. To create is not to be a father in the highest sense of the term. The artist is not called the father of the picture he paints; neither is the inventor called the father of the machine he contrives. To be a father is to communicate an existence like his own. All who believe in Jesus become through Him “partakers of the divine nature,” (2 Pet. 1:4), “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).

Children of God! Think of it! John said, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). Precious relationship, is it not? In relation to humanity, He is King; but to those in Christ Jesus, Father! In the New Testament Scriptures, God is spoken of as King only five times, but as Father more than two hundred; while in the memorable Sermon on the Mount, this term is used sixteen times. It is baptism in the name of the Father; the lesson about prayer and providence begins with the word Father; the announcement of Christ’s Messiahship is in the name of the Father; the Advocate is with the Father; the Comforter is to come from the Father; “our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,” of whom the latter

declared: "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me" (1 John 1:3; John 16:27).

A young minister in a London church lost his wife. He had a little child and the church members hoped some relative would come to help him take care of it, but none appeared. Two or three years passed, and one Sunday, when the church pews were full, the minister came up the aisle leading the child, whom he seated in the corner of the front pew. The service went on until the sermon began. In his sermon, the minister spoke of the mother of Christ and her agony of heart at the cross. He said, "Think what a child's life is without a mother's love! Who else can wrap a babe in swaddling clothes? Who can tend, who can cherish, who can love, but a mother?" In the depth of feeling, the preacher's strong voice halted, as if waiting for an answer; and in the hush of the great congregation, a little child's voice spoke out very sweetly and clearly, "A father would do every bit as well, Papa."

So our Father, with a heart more tender than a mother's, with sympathy more pronounced than a brother's, and with love exceeding all human love combined, seeks to do the greatest good and be the greatest good to the greatest number of the family of mankind. Can we not then say with Jesus, "Our Father," and declare with Marianne Farningham, –

"Our Father knows, our Father cares!
How great Thy gentleness!
We dare to live, and dare to die,
We are not fatherless.
Dear Father, whom we cannot see,
Our life is glad because of Thee."

2. The Intensity – So Loved

The first line of Genesis reads, “In the beginning God,” and according to the beloved disciple, “God is love” (Gen. 1:1; 1 John 4:8). Love, therefore, must have been the first thing that inhabited space. It must have existed before God said, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3). It must have been the master of all arts before the heavens were studded with glittering stars. And when heaven and earth pass away, love will still endure; for “love never faileth” (1 Cor. 13:8). It is indestructible.

To all creatures, God has imparted, to a greater or lesser degree, this attribute of love. The lower forms of animal life are not devoid of it, and as the scale of being rises, so does the degree of love increase. It is noticed in the mother race of birds, beasts, and reptiles, but while love in the human being, and especially in the Christian, is not bounded by family ties, it reaches out to all classes and reveals itself in a thousand ways.

The statement, God “so loved” is not without proof. Everything demonstrates it. He “so loved” as to make a beautiful world; “so loved” as to make a pure man able to inhabit the world; “so loved” as to walk and talk with this man in the world; “so loved” as to devise a plan to save man when he fell victim to temptation; “so loved” as to warn transgressors of their ways, and to give promises and hold out inducements to live holy lives; “so loved” as to give a Redeemer to restore to man what he had forfeited by sin; “so loved” as to adopt into His family all who would approach Him in the name of His Son; so loved as to prepare mansions for all in His celestial Paradise. And this love has not stopped. Still, He loves us.

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