

# How God's Love is Manifested

by Ellen G. White

True love is not merely a sentiment or an emotion. It is a living principle, a principle that is manifest in action. True love, wherever it exists, will control the life. Thus it is with the love of God. "God is love;" and in all His works, in all His dealings with mankind, His character is revealed.

God manifested His love in the work of creation. When the earth was created, it was holy and beautiful. God pronounced it "very good." Every flower, every shrub, every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator. Everything upon which the eye rested was lovely, and filled the mind with thoughts of the love of God. Every sound was music, in perfect harmony with the voice of God.

The things of nature, upon which we look today, give us but a faint conception of Eden's beauty and glory; yet the natural world, with unmistakable voice, proclaims the love of God. Even now "the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." It still reveals the working of the great Master-Artist. It declares that One omnipotent in power, great in goodness and mercy, has created all things.

The green fields, the lofty trees, the glad sunshine, the clouds, the dew, the solemn silence of the night, the glory of the starry heavens, and the moon in its beauty, all bear witness to His wonder-working power. Not a drop of rain falls, not a ray of light is shed upon our unthankful world, but it testifies to God's long forbearance and His great love.

Through tempting man to sin, Satan hoped to counteract the tide of divine love flowing to the human race; but, instead of this, his work resulted in calling forth new and deeper manifestations of God's mercy and His goodness.

In redemption God has revealed His love in sacrifice, a sacrifice so broad and deep and high that it is immeasurable. "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When Adam's sin plunged the race into hopeless misery, God might have cut Himself loose from fallen beings. He might have treated them as sinners deserve to be treated. He might have commanded the angels of heaven to pour out upon our world the vials of His wrath. He might have removed this dark blot from His universe. But He did not do this. Instead of banishing them from His presence, He came still nearer to the fallen race. He gave His Son to become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Christ by His human relationship to men drew them close to God. He clothed His divine nature with the garb of humanity, and demonstrated before the heavenly universe, before the unfallen worlds, how much God loves the children of men.

The gift of God to man is beyond computation. Nothing was withheld. God would not permit it to be said that He could have done more, or revealed to humanity a greater measure of love. In the gift of Christ He gave all heaven.

The Highest, who was with the Father before the world was, submitted to humiliation that He might uplift humanity. Prophecy withdraws the veil, that we may behold the throne of heaven, that we may see upon that throne, high and lifted up, One who in human form came to our world to suffer, to be lacerated with stripes, and bruised for our iniquities. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Before the heavenly universe the Lord of Glory suffered in human form that sin might be pardoned,

and sinners redeemed. He died that the love of God, as a mighty helper, might flow to all suffering human beings.

Through yielding to sin, man placed his will under the control of Satan. He became a helpless captive in the tempter's power. God sent His Son into our world to break the power of Satan, and to emancipate the will of man. He sent Him to proclaim liberty to the captives, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. When man places himself under the control of God, the will becomes firm and strong to do right, the heart is cleansed from selfishness and filled with Christ-like love. The mind yields to the authority of the law of love, and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The powers, hitherto "members of unrighteousness," and "servants of sin," are consecrated to the service of the God of love.

That this redemption might be ours, God withheld not even the sacrifice of Himself. He gave Himself in His Son. The Father suffered with Christ in all His humiliation and agony. He suffered as He saw the Son of His love despised and rejected by those whom He came to elevate, ennoble, and save. He saw Him hanging upon the cross, mocked and jeered by the passers-by, and He hid as it were His face from Him. He saw Christ bearing the sin of the world, and dying in the sinner's stead. The human heart knows the love of a parent for his child. We know what a mother's love will do and suffer for her beloved one. But never can the heart of man fathom the depths of God's self-sacrifice.

O, the cross, the cross! It is set up that we may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Only the cross can measure the length and breadth, the depth and height, of infinite love, the greatness of the Father's sacrifice for lost humanity.

And the Lord Jehovah did not deem the plan of salvation complete while invested only with His own love. By His appointment He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. As our Intercessor, Christ's office-work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters.

Christ has pledged Himself to be our substitute and surety, and He neglects no one. There is an inexhaustible fund of perfect obedience accruing from His obedience. In heaven His merits, His self-denial and self-sacrifice, are treasured as incense to be offered up with the prayers of His people. As the sinner's sincere, humble prayers ascend to the throne of God, Christ mingles with them the merits of His own life of perfect obedience. Our prayers are made fragrant by this incense. Christ has pledged Himself to intercede in our behalf, and the Father always hears His Son.

This is the mystery of godliness. That Christ should take human nature, and by a life of humiliation elevate man in the scale of moral worth with God; that He should carry His adopted nature to the throne of God, and there present His children to the Father, to have conferred upon them an honour exceeding that conferred upon the angels,--this is the marvel of the heavenly universe, the mystery into which angels desire to look. This is love that melts the sinner's heart.

And God has manifested His love in ministry. In Him all unselfish ministry has its origin. Our Father in heaven is constantly engaged in upholding the things which He has created. Every leaf grows, every flower blooms, every fruit develops, by the power of God. In Him "we live, and move, and have our being." Each heart-beat, each breath, is the inspiration of Him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life,--the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM. The great and infinite God lives not unto Himself, but for the benefit and blessing of every being and every object of His creation.

Satan's principle is self-serving. This principle he attributed to God, misrepresenting His character to the world. And he led man to accept the principle of selfishness. He caused him to believe that in serving himself he would find happiness. By the Son of God this principle was to be demonstrated as false. By Him the Father was to be rightly represented. The ideal of true ministry God committed to His Son, and bade Him work it out in humanity.

That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set an example of true service. His whole life on earth was spent in ministering to others.

In all the afflictions of humanity He was afflicted. He saw the work of Satan revealed in all their woe, and He made every case of need and sorrow His own. With a power that never quailed, He cast out the evil spirits that possessed both mind and body. The power of love was in all His healing, and of the suffering multitudes that were brought to Him, it was said, "He healed them all."

The Saviour saw a still greater need than bodily suffering. He saw symptoms of a deeper illness. The sufferings of the body excited His pity, but He was moved to still greater pity by the need of the soul.

With a love that never faltered, Christ spoke to men the words of eternal life. The word of God, which the teachers of Israel had obscured with their traditions and man-made commandments, Christ opened to the people in its purity and divine beauty. Men marvelled at His teaching, and said, "Never man spake like this man." To the weary and sin-burdened He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He invited them, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Before men and angels, by His life of obedience and ministry, Christ represented the character of God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."