

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart February 2024

Such Wondrous Love

By Steve Huston



How would you describe God's love? In 1917, Frederick Lehman described such wondrous love with the words of this now well-loved hymn: *The Love of God*. Below is the first of his three verses and the chorus:

The love of God is
greater far
Than tongue or pen can
ever tell;
It goes beyond the high-
est star,
And reaches to the low-
west hell;
The guilty pair, bowed
down with care,
God gave His Son to
win;
His erring child He rec-
onciled,
And pardoned from his
sin.

Refrain:

Oh, love of God, how
rich and pure!
How measureless and
strong!

It shall forevermore
endure—
The saints' and angels'
song.

Some would call God's love *Indescribable*, which is the title of a film showing how the lyrics of this song came to be and the hardships of Lehman's life during that time. Yet the Apostle Paul clearly describes such self-sacrificing love ("charity") in I Corinthians 13.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (vv. 4-7)

Such is the love of Jesus. The above verses ought to also describe our love for all others, particularly for the church, as Christ lives in us and through us.

In Second Corinthians

chapter five, he describes the affects that God's love has upon those of us who have been its undeserving recipients. For those who believe on the Lord Jesus, Christ's love is a constricting love (v. 14); it holds us captive. We're controlled and held within bounds by Christ's love for us. Our motives are not to further our own agendas. Instead, we're motivated by our love for God and for our fellow man. O, that others would also know the love of God.

Next, Paul tells us it's a love which changes us (vv. 15, 17). We no longer live for ourselves; we live for Jesus! We are new creatures that are defined by love. S.D. Gordon describes every Christian virtue and means of grace through the eyes of love:

"That marvelous passion – the love of God – heightless, depthless, shoreless, shall flood our hearts, making us as gentle and tenderhearted and self-sacrificing and gracious as He. Every phase of life will become a phase of love. Peace is

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love resting. Bible study is love reading its lover's letters. Prayer is love keeping trust. Conflict with sin is love jealously fighting for its Lover. Hatred of sin is love shrinking from that, which separates from its lover. Sympathy is love tenderly feeling. Enthusiasm is love burning. Hope is love expecting. Patience is love waiting. Faithfulness is love sticking fast. Humility is love taking its true place. Modesty is love keeping out of sight. Soul winning is love pleading.

“Love is revolutionary. It radically changes us and revolutionizes our spirit toward all others. Love is democratic. It ruthlessly levels all class distinctions. Love is intensely practical. It is always hunting something to do.”

Finally, Paul shows us that God's is a commissioning love (vv. 18-20). Having been changed by God's fathomless love, we are given “the ministry of reconciliation” and

are made “ambassadors for Christ.” We are compelled, by God's love, to share the gospel with others. We are moved by love for their souls, thereby compassionately pleading with them to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Andrew Murray shares the impact that Christ's love had on the early church.

“When Christ and His love took possession of our hearts, He gave us this love that we might bring others to Him. In this way Christ's kingdom was extended. Everyone who had the love of Christ in his heart was constrained to tell others. This was the case in the early Christian church. After the Day of Pentecost, people went out and told of the love of Christ, which they had themselves experienced. Heathen writers have told us that the rapid spread of Christianity in the first century was due to the fact that each convert, being filled with the love of Christ, tried to bring the good news to others.”

It's this love for the glory of God and the magnify-

ing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, that “turned the world upside down.”

In our day, how is the love of Christ manifesting itself in our church, in our culture, in our country? The love of Christ should humble us in our unworthiness, compel us to show and to share the truth of His love with others, and cause us to live lives of praise and thanksgiving to our gracious God in heaven.

“Love of man necessarily arises out of the love of God. The love of the creature is but the corollary to the love of the Creator.”

~ John Hooper

“Christ came not to possess our brains with some cold opinions, that send down a freezing and benumbing influence into our hearts.

Christ was a master of the life, not of the school; and he is the best Christian whose heart beats with the purest pulse towards heaven, not he whose head spins the finest cobweb.”

~ Ralph Cudworth



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