

William MacDonald:

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:10)

Love is that quality in God which causes Him to lavish unbounded affection on others. His love is manifest in giving good and perfect gifts to the beloved.

We can give only a few of the myriad of verses that speak of that love! “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3). “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...” (Eph. 2:4). And, of course, the best known of all, “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” (John 3:16).

When John says “God is love” (1 John 4:8), he is not defining God, but insisting that love is a key element in the divine nature. We do not worship love, but the God of love.

His love had no beginning and can have no end. It is limitless in its dimensions. It is absolutely pure, without taint of selfishness or any other sin. It is sacrificial, never minding the cost. It seeks only the welfare of others, and nothing in return. It goes out to the unlovely as well as to the lovely, to enemies as well as to friends. It is not drawn out by any virtues in its objects, but only by the goodness of the Giver.

The practical implications of this sublime truth are obvious. “Therefore be imitators of God,” said Paul, “as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us” (Eph. 5:1,2a, NASB). Our love should ascend to the Lord, should flow out to our brethren, and should extend to the unsaved world.

Contemplation of His love should also inspire deepest worship. As we fall at His feet, we must say repeatedly:

How Thou canst love me as Thou dost
And be the God Thou art
Is darkness to my intellect
But sunshine to my heart.