

The Love of the Father.

by Andrew Bonar

The Father's amazing love is revealed in his sparing the guilty world, choosing some of the guilty world, giving Christ as the sinner's way of salvation, and revealing himself to us through the incarnation of Jesus.

Scripture: John 6:38

Topics: "The Love of the Father", "Salvation through Christ"

Description

Andrew Bonar emphasizes the profound love of the Father as revealed through Jesus Christ, highlighting that the Father's will is to save and raise up all who believe in the Son. He explains that the Father's love is evident in His patience with a guilty world, His choice of certain individuals for salvation, and the ultimate gift of His Son as the way to redemption. Bonar encourages believers to recognize the depth of the Father's love, which is the source of all grace and mercy, and to respond with love and faith. He concludes by affirming that the Father's love is the foundation of eternal life for all who come to Him through Christ.

Transcript

'For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' John 6: 38-40. None of the Evangelists or Apostles speak so much of the Father as John, who knew most of his Son Jesus Christ, and leant upon his bosom.

The reason is, John felt that the mind of the Father and the mind of the Son were the same - entirely the same. He was; therefore, engaged in the same topic when he unfolded the Father's love. It is remarkable that it is this apostle who records what Jesus revealed concerning the Father, and how Jesus delighted to point his disciples to him. Thus, he shows us in the context, verse 37, that Jesus went into the secret of his pavilion when his soul was grieved by the perverse unbelief of men.

In that hour, when Jesus could find no refreshment in the men around him, he turned back for a moment's joy to the Father's love. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me!' He bathes his soul in that depth of eternal love. He surveys those given to him - Abel, and the saints of his age - Abraham, and his faithful ones - Peter, John, Mary, Lydia - the few in Sardis - the souls under the altar - and, as he surveys them, he sees his Father's love sparkle from each one, for these are his Father's gift; and forthwith his own love overflows on all that stand by.

He flashes out his own love when he in the same moment cries, 'And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' It seems that in that hour he thought upon the future. He saw, as he uttered the words, 'All whom the Father giveth me,' how man would be prone to take this reference to the Father's love as indicating a difference between the grace of the Father and of the Son. He saw that many would say, that Jesus damped the rising hope of the coming sinner when he said, 'All that the Father giveth me,' and therefore does he forthwith cast out that other cord of love, 'And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'

So great is my Father's love to me and to perishing men, that assuredly there shall be souls that come to me; and so great is my love and his love alike, that no coming one shall on any account be cast out. Dear brethren, if the snow had never lain on the tops of Lebanon, Jordan would never have been full or overflowing. There would have been no Saviour's grace for man to know and feel, if the Father had not 'so loved the world' as to give us his only begotten. Yet often is the Father's love suspected or forgotten, although he is the fountain-head, and all the streams of grace have had their source in him.

'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' James 1:17. O brethren, we should love him as Jesus did. Come and see what wondrous reason there is why we should do so.

I. The Father's amazing love appears in his sparing this guilty world, though he spared not the angels that sinned. - You know that it is the Father's part to arrange, and purpose, and decree - it is his to decide and appoint whatsoever cometh to pass. Now, in a past eternity, he had the case of this fallen world under consideration. He might have decreed immediate woe as soon as sin should be committed by men. For sin deserves not only eternal, but immediate curse; and he had seen meet so to determine in regard to those angels who should leave 'their first habitation.' But the barren fig-tree was spared - this most guilty world received a day of grace. It became the very theatre for the display of long-suffering; so that our text exhibits to us the Son of God walking on a spared world, digging at the roots of its barren trees. 'Herein is love !' For to spare this whole world for a time, implied the intention of enduring man's rebellion and man's unceasing provocations, for at least six thousand years. It was equivalent to the Father saying, 'Lo! I will submit to bear man's apostacy - to allow him to provoke the eyes of my glory - to wag his head at me and say, 'Can he see through the dark cloud '?' - to cast up mire and the very filth of hell upon my pure white throne - nay, to aim at 'erasing my love from my own heart, and even strike at my own being !' O did it not require love ineffable ere this could be resolved upon! This guilty world's day of grace is a most marvellous proof and manifestation of Jehovah's depth of love. And, thou wicked and slothful servant, who sayest, 'He is an austere master,' shalt be confounded for ever. The Father needs do no more than point to this time of most undeserved long-suffering. You speak of mercy; and some of you say, He could not be a God of mercy if he cast away so many souls; but already has his treatment of you displayed his mercy. Your day of grace proves him to be a loving God. O man, see to it before you are summoned to the Judgment Seat; for your plea, drawn from his mercy, is already dismissed. 'What will you do in the day of visitation ?' You abuse your day - you sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play - you dance before your golden calf - and then complain of a long-suffering God, because his mercy bears with you only for a lifetime, and will not wink at your sin to all eternity!

II. The Father's amazing love appears in choosing some of this guilty world, who should certainly be to the praise of his glory. - Our text refers to this in the expression, 'All that the Father hath given me.' And so at other times - 'Thou gavest them me,' John xvii. 6; and 'The men whom thou hast given me;' 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation

of the world, having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.'

Eph. i. 5, 6. Now, there was a mystery of love in this election. It lies in the fact that, but for this further determination of the Father, none of our world would after all have been saved. To give men full liberty to come and be saved is love indeed. To procure and provide a ransom available for all who do come, whatever they be, is love yet higher still. But love can ascend to a height beyond this - far beyond it. It has ascended infinitely higher, for it has resolved to draw many, many thousands to itself, who otherwise would not have come at all.

The Lord saw, dear brethren, that none in all this world would have come - not one shipwrecked man would ever have swam to shore, for he hated the shore more than the very waves that lashed him. No manslayer would have crossed the threshold of the city of refuge; he would rather linger in the open plain and risk the blow of the avenger. No debtor would have deigned to accept the payment - no captive to receive the ransom; even though all was free - even though entreated to do so by God himself - even though hell was behind, and heaven before.

The world's corruption was deep beyond conception. Earth was an open sepulchre; and each man hated his God. It was in reference to what he saw of this fearful enmity that Jesus said, in melancholy pity, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' John 6:44. They are so totally depraved, they are so wedded to their lusts, they are so gross, and sensual - so truly dead in sin - they do not wish to be freed from their covetousness, their envy, their lust, their power to draw draughts of pleasure from ungodly revelry, or from intense engrossment with the lawful occupations of life.

They hide among the trees of the garden at the first sound of the voice of the Lord, even when he comes with grace on his lips, and goodwill to men in his heart. O brethren, to be able to love any of such a race, argues strange and mysterious depth of love in God the Father. And he did fix his love on many of these; he did it freely, and he did it determinedly. So deliberate, decided, determined was this eternal love of the Father, that it made success certain in the case of each on whom it was fixed.

It was such a love, that its plans and purposes implied the operation of each person of the Godhead. The Spirit must go forth and draw, and the Son go forth and die. This was the Father's plan! O what amazing love is here! What thoughts are in his heart to usward! He will not let go his purpose of having some of our fallen race standing round his throne. 1. Anxious souls! Surely the God that would do this from all eternity, is a God of infinite grace. What a bosom is this to lean upon what an inducement to draw near!

Does it not confirm you in the belief of that declaration, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out !' He who makes such provision to ensure that many shall come, is one who will in nowise reject any that are coming! 2. Unawakened men! There is nothing in the character of God that can account for your treatment of him ; - there is nothing in him or his ways that can excuse your hatred. It is the fearful depravity of your own souls that alone can account for your utter ungodliness.

Your blood is on your own heads! Your heart may be as deceitful as it is wicked, so that you may not believe your own deplorable state of enmity; but Jehovah has said by the lips of his Son concerning all that thus resist him, 'Ye have hated me without a cause!'

III. The Father's amazing love appears in his giving Christ to be the sinner's way of salvation. - It was he who made a new and living way for a sinner's return to him. 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life ;' verse 40. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish ;' John 3:16. And hence the name given him in 2 Cor. 1:3, 'The Father of mercies ;' and in Rom.8:32, 'He that spared not his Son.'

Had he for once caused one ray of the inaccessible light to shoot down to this earth in order to teach us our state of darkness - had he shown us one crown worn above, or one triumphal palm - had he caused us to hear one note of heavenly melody - all this would have left us inexcusable, if we did not ever after covet earnestly the things above. But he took the best gift in all his treasures; nay, he took the Son that was in his bosom, and gave him to man. Angels saw it done, and rapturously sang, 'To you is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord !' and all men that have had anointed eyes have responded as they gazed, 'To us a child is born unto us a son is given!'

It is by this measuring-line that you must fathom the depth of the ocean. It is by this fact that you must try to measure the unsearchable love of the Father. You test your fellow-creatures' love by the sacrifices they would make for you. You judge of Abraham's love to his God by his sacrifice of Isaac. Now judge of the love of the Father by his gift of his Son. It was the Father saying, 'I cannot give up my law and my holiness for that would be ceasing to be God. I cannot hide my righteousness and resign its demands; for that would ruin all.

I cannot put the burden on my angels; for they could not bear it one hour. I cannot leave it on man; for then, not one of them should ever stand before me. But this is my will. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; let man be dipt in the blood of the Almighty's fellow !' He not only gave him, but substituted him in the room of the guilty - 'the just for the unjust to bring us unto God.' O brethren, the Father resolved that all salvation shall be found in the Son. He carefully avoided leaving any of the details of salvation for us to perform.

The Father was he who provided that the chastisement of our peace should be laid upon another; and no atoning tears left for us to shed - no atoning suffering left for us to endure - not one atoning sigh left for us to heave. Therefore, 'it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he put him to grief' Isaiah53:10; and this he did with such calm, decided love, that the appeal of his beloved Son to him, 'Father if it be possible, let this cup pass,' served only to manifest his long-settled and unchanging plan.

He had resolved that he should have children and sons from among men; but he had further resolved, that their way of becoming his children and sons should all express his love. It was to be free; they were to come to him from the far country 'in a chariot paved with love.' All he asked of them was, that they should ascend the chariot and be carried home; for as many as received Jesus were at once to receive the privilege of sons of God. 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God,' John 3:1; but equally amazing that we should become sons in a way so free.

It costs Jesus all; it costs us nothing. Every drop of the vial falls on Jesus, and not even the dregs are left. Every arrow that was needed to express the Lord's hatred of sin and vindicate his law, sinks into the heart of Jesus, and is aimed at him by the Father's hand! All penalties are exacted of him; all obedience is rendered by him; and all this is done according to, and in exact fulfilment of, the Father's purpose of love to us. These are just the thoughts of the Father toward us, carried out into accomplishment.

Now, brethren, the Father, having given us this way and warrant for coming to him, manifests his love yet more by shutting you up to the necessity of taking this one way, this only warrant. 'Every one that hath heard and learnt of the Father cometh unto me,' John 6:45, said Jesus; and 'no man cometh unto the Father but by me,' 14: 6. You are reduced to the necessity of being saved by a free salvation. It is written, 'Him hath God the Father sealed ;' 6: 27. He has made Jesus to be your Joseph; he has given him the royal signet.

When you cry for bread, he says to all, 'Go to Joseph;' Genesis 41: 55. Jesus has the seal of the Father. O with such a warrant, and going to one whose love is such that it planned this way, one whose bosom is filled with calm, determined, eternal love, can you hesitate as to duty? Can you hesitate as to the way of safety? Nothing but enmity on your part, and deep-rooted dislike, can account for your resting contented without possession of the Father's gift. What more will you venture to say the Father ought to have given?

See what he has already given, and given without any claim on your part. If you are lost, your ruin will lie on yourself. Will ever your blasphemous lips dare to lay your damnation to the charge of such a God? Oh, fall in with his plan of grace! The plan that such a God proposes, must be one worthy of such a sinner's immediate acceptance. And immediate acceptance is the only manner in which such a sinner can shew any due sense of the free grace of his God. You who do already believe, be reminded that it is to the Father you owe all your peace, and joy, and blessed assurance of eternal life.

You were once far off; and once you were only anxiously wishing to find his favour. But he showed your anxious souls his economy of grace - he brought you to drink of his living waters that are without price - he spread out the warrant before your eyes, and you were made to see that there was nothing left for you to complete. The Father's plan was so gracious, that, in seeing the Son, you saw a finished salvation. Oh, give glory evermore at once to 'Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb.'

IV. The amazing love of the Father appears in his revealing himself to us. - He does not act through an interpreter only, but he makes himself known. He gives us, as it were, the means of searching and trying his heart, that we may be quite sure of his whole mind towards us, and that his matchless character may draw our souls to himself. He does this through the incarnation of Jesus. For we are told in our text, 'I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me,' - that is, not to exercise any separate will of mine as man, but as man to exhibit and to do the Father's will.

All, therefore, that is in Christ, expresses the mind of his Father also. 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me ;' John 14:10. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' John 14: 9. O brethren, there is manifold love in his revelation to us of the Father. It is not only that our suspicious hearts would never have been quite at rest unless we had thus known the Father also; but it gives us a view of his willingness to condescend to us in any way that may more fully draw us, or be more likely to induce us to love 'the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul and all our mind, and all our strength.'

He seems herein to come out of his 'light inaccessible,' that he may become known to his fallen creatures. This is like humiliation; it is the Father's condescension. If Solomon, in order to engage the confidence of some loathsome leper, had come forth in all his glory, in his royal apparel, and with his golden sceptre, then would all the land have rung with the story of his condescending kindness. And it is not less that our God has done. He has come forth that we might know him.

He has put on the robe of humanity, wherein he could be best looked upon by our mortal eye, and he has shewn himself in all his grace and attractive love to a fallen world. Herein is love! the Father will go to the

utmost length in order to draw you back from the pit. Like the Grecian mother who, by her song, drew back her wilful child from the edge of the awful precipice, and brought it to her bosom secure; so the Lord, by the discovery of his infinitely glorious and gracious nature, would draw you from your sin.

He would present to your idolatrous and adulterous eyes a sight more attractive than earth, in its softest forms, can furnish. He would keep you back from hell, O sinner, by manifesting himself to you as altogether lovely! O how deep is your corruption! How strong your enmity! How unconquerable your perversity! You hate God, after seeing him revealed in Jesus! Every exhibition of greatness, mingled with grace in Jesus, was the revelation of the Father also! Every discovery of patience, long-suffering, and grieved love - every time Jesus went apart to weep in secret places for the pride of men, it was the Father's feeling also.

When Jesus beheld Jerusalem, and wept over it, O there was a tender pity there that just pictured forth the Father's yearning compassion - as if the Father himself had come forth from the 'light inaccessible,' and had spoken in the hearing and sight of men, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah, and set thee as Zeboim?' Nor is it less the Father's mind, when Jesus cries in your ears, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.'

This is the Father's will who has sent him. As if he knew that you might say, on hearing that it is certain that all shall come who are given to Christ, 'Ah, then, perhaps though I were to come, I would not be welcomed,' the Saviour says, and the Father speaks by his lips, 'Him that cometh I will in nowise cast out.' You shall never be rejected, if you come - never on the ground that you were too great a sinner - never on the ground that, though you come, you were not given to Christ.

'You shall in nowise be cast out.' Any question regarding the Father's secret purposes, or the Father's accurate foreknowledge of who are his own - any question of this sort is quite out of your province. It is friends who get acquainted with the secrets of another's heart; it is not strangers. You are to come on the strength of the warrant alone; and so you will become a friend and a child of his family, and be no more cast out.

V. The Father's amazing love appears in appointing the eternal reward for redeemed sinners. - Our text says, 'I came down to do the will of him that sent me,' and 'this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day;' John 6:39. Therefore, says Jesus, 'I will raise him up at the last day;' verse 40. It is remarkable how the Father delights to honour the Son while wearing our nature.

It is of him in our nature, nay, in the act of bearing away, like the scape-goat, our sins on his person, that it is written, 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, and take it up again.' John 10:17. It is in our nature that he is to judge, and to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess when he appears, clothed in our nature, and wearing the many crowns of this earth's dominion. Now, love to him in our nature is love to us. O, then, brethren, read here the Father's delight in our race.

He takes our nature, in the person of Jesus, to his nearest presence; he sheds round it, in the person of Jesus, his brightest beams; he places it on his right hand in majesty. But farther, it is written here, that the rising of the believers in the resurrection of the just is appointed of the Father - 'that he should raise it up again at the last day.' It is he who has purposed the glorious triumph over death, which believers gain in the resurrection morn. It is he who planned that they should live and reign with Christ, blessed and holy, children of the first resurrection, and never subject to the second death.

It is he who blesses them; for the King shall say, 'Come ye blessed of my Father;' Matthew 25:34. It is he who bestows the kingdom upon them; 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me ;' Luke 22: 29. It is he who gives them power over the nations; for Christ in giving his power says, 'Even as I received of my Father;' Revelations 2: 27. It is the Father who introduces them to the glory of Christ; John 17: 24. It is in the Father's house they dwell - in his many mansions; John 14: 2.

And even as Jesus went to the Father so do they; for they are 'with him where he is,' in the immediate presence of the Father. Thus, brethren, every token of love, in that blessed kingdom, bears the impress of the Father's grace. Every glory there sparkles with beams of the Father's love. O what a God of love is our God. And it is to his bosom the returning sinner comes. Sweet and blessed hope! to be near him, to try the depths of his heart - to have access through Jesus in our nature to his bosom - and so to be able to pour out our heart to him, and feel him pour out his to us.

This is life eternal. A child of God once asked, in meditating on the words - 'Where thou causest thy flock to rest' - where this resting-place might be thought to be? One said, 'In Jesus.' But the other replied, 'It is even in the Father's bosom.' And truly this is a believer's deepest rest. 'By him we believe in God,' 1 Peter 1: 21, that is, the Father; and 'we come unto God by him;' Heb. 7: 25. It is your place of rest, believer. It is the inner apartment of the pavilion - the secret of the tent.

It is the farthest off spot from earth, it is out of sight of its pleasures, joys, gain, ambition. 'Love not the world, neither the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' 1 John 2:15. 'Little children, ye have known the Father;' verse 13. O beloved, before I conclude, let me once more cast out the cords of love to draw the rebellious among you. This God is our God. This is he who assures you of his desire for your salvation, 'I have no pleasure at all in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord, but rather that he turn from his ways and live,' You are the worm that tried to crawl up to his throne, and to sit down as sovereign, and yet he has not crushed you!

Your bosom is the seat of fearful sin, hatred of the holy one, dark suspicions of his sincerity, fond plans of self-exaltation, selfish schemes for present indulgence, ungodly fancies, sensual, earthly, devilish desires. Yet still our God, even the Father, laments over you. He takes no blame to himself for your wretched degradation; for, on the contrary, he has at every step cast hindrances in your way to hell. He laments over you, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found !'

He loved Jesus all the more for dying and rising again (John 10: 17), because it opened up the channel of love; it gave vent to his love to man. Only draw near and see this ocean. It is the same ocean of love which is seen when you look on a dying Saviour; but it is the same ocean seen from another point of view. And what can exceed the power of the appeal which God hereby makes to you, when he declares, 'That it is not the love of the Son alone, but the unbought, free, eternal love of Godhead !'

It is the Father who lays down Jesus for a foundation stone, and cries to a careless world, 'Behold! I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone.' It is the Father who calls and invites, 'Behold! my servant whom I have chosen! mine elect in whom my soul delighteth !' It is the Father who points to the cross and cries to all the earth, 'I, even I am he who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own name's sake, and will not remember thy sins.'

This is the Father's will, and Christ himself is the herald that proclaims it to a lost world, 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life!'

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