

God Is Love

Three little words—*God is love*—cover the whole realm of divine teaching. His love reaches the highest heights. It fathoms the deepest depths and sweeps the circumference of the eternities. God is love!

These three words are the alpha and the omega of the Bible. They cover every judgment that has thundered across its pages, every promise that has soothed the dying pillow and every warning that has arrested an endangered course.

Every efficacy that has blotted out sin, and every refuge that has harbored a wrecked soul have been by virtue of this indestructible truth of the ages: God is love.

His love is higher than everything else. It is higher than His greatness and His justice.

For sweep of influence and magnitude of power, love rivals every other sentiment known in the human family. It is the oil for the grinding wheels of life.

It is the daybreak of every earthly night. It is the star in every human sky. What is money, beauty or fame when compared to love? And this love still remains in the world, and as long as the solar system swings round upon its axis, it will be with us. There is no earthly love to compare with it.

No Greater Love

Consider the evidence we have had of the powerful love of country. We have seen the long lines of the fairest and best of our land leave friends, family and comforts for this love.

The love of children for parents is a wonderful love. This summer when I asked a young lady—a remarkably gifted musician—why she did not go to the great city and make money and fame, as she could so easily do, she said she could not

leave the old folks.

A mother's love is a wonderful thing. How can we describe it? Into what depths of sorrow and suffering will it not plunge for her child? What hardships will it not suffer—what toils of the hands, what toils of the feet and what toils of the head will it not embrace? What long, hard roads will it not travel?

There is nothing more beautiful than a Christian father's love. Yet, human love in comparison to God's love is as a candle to the sun. No, even this does not compare with it. There is no comparison.

Can I compare it to the oceans? No, God can gather these in the hollow of His hand. Can I compare it to the heavens? No, as a scroll the heavens will roll away but God's love will never pass away.

Can I compare it to the space that envelops the worlds? No, because the worlds will burn, and divine love can never burn. Its power is omnipotent. Its life is eternal. The whole plan of redemption was worked on this principle from the beginning to the end: God's love is love that came down. Christ did not come to this poor world of ours through a palatial arch but through a barn door (see Luke 2:1-20).

He began in a horse's trough. He entered through a stable and ended on the cross. There was none so poor, But He was not poorer. He starved in the wilderness with a stone for His pillow.

Oh the depth into which he plunged that He might lift us up.

Love Is the Cure

He bottles our tears and catches our sighs. He is our shelter. To the orphan He will be a father, and to the widow, a husband. To the outcast He will be a home, and to the worst, loathsome wretch who today crawls out of the ditch of his abominations, crying to Him for mercy, He will be an all-

pardoning redeemer.

We could do without rest, peace, comfort and care, but how could we ever do without pardon? What other escape is there for our sins? And what an abundance of measures men have tried in order to flee them.

But given the swift feet of the hind, can we outrun them? When given the waters of the oceans, can we overflow them? Add sea to sea, river to river, lake to lake, and in one great, measureless, fathomless volume of water, can we drown them?

Every day we learn of desperate attempts men make to rid their consciences, their memories, their souls of sins. They leap from the parapet of a bridge. They leave home and country. They change their name and appearance.

They deny their guilt by every word and means they can marshal to their dilemma—all to escape their sins. But do they succeed? “Oh,” you say, “is there nothing to cover sin? Is there no power to save the soul from going down into the pit? Is there no ransom?”

Your sins rise up and answer, “Thy ways and thy doings have procured these things unto thee” (see Ezek. 24:14). You must die.

Those whom you have harmed and hurt cry out: “His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin” (Prov. 5:22). You must die.

Justice cries out: “Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). You must die. Judgment thunders: “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). You must die.

But breaking through the ranks of heaven and hell there comes one with garments dyed crimson-red. His brow drops blood. His side is torn. His hands have nail prints, and His feet are bruised.

His heart is bleeding, and He throws His emaciated body across the gaping chasm between justice and mercy, and cries, "Stand back, ye lawful accusers. I die a ransom!"

I turn aside the blood-soaked mantle, and I see five bleeding wounds He bears. And I say, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). God's love will sing while the archangel's trumpet peals amid the crash of toppling sepulchers and the rush of the wings of the rising dead (see 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

His love shall kindle new suns after all other lights have gone out. It will be an over-billowing sea after all other oceans have swept themselves away.

The rocks will turn grey with age, and the forests will be unmoored in the hurricane. The sun will shut its fiery eyelid, and the stars will drop like burnt-out coals.

The sea will heave its last groan and lash itself into expiring agony. The continents will drop like anchors in the deep and the world will wrap itself in a sheet of flame. But God's love will never die!

Evangeline Cory Booth (1865-1950) was the seventh child of Salvation Army founders William and Catherine Booth. She spent much of her time in the slums of London—often in the disguise of a ragged flower seller or a match girl. She became principal of the International Training College at Clapton, which trained young women and men for missionary work. In 1904, Evangeline's father gave her responsibility for all the work of the Salvation Army in the United States. She served in this capacity for 30 years.