

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical and Southern Studies

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SBSS

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1 If Your beloved Son, O God,
Had not to earth descended
And in our mortal flesh and blood
Had not sin's power ended,
Then this poor, wretched soul of mine
In hell eternally would pine
Because of my transgression.

2 But now I find sweet peace and rest;
Despair no more reigns o'er me.
No more am I by sin oppressed,
For Christ has borne sin for me.
Upon the cross for me He died
That, reconciled, I might abide
With You, my God, forever.

3 I trust in Him with all my heart;
Now all my sorrow ceases.
His words abiding peace impart;
His blood from guilt releases.
Free grace through Him I now obtain;
He washes me from ev'ry stain,
And pure I stand before Him.

4 All righteousness by works is vain;
The Law brings condemnation.
True righteousness by faith I gain;
Christ's work is my salvation.
His death, that perfect sacrifice,
Has paid the all-sufficient price;
In Him my hope is anchored.

5 My guilt, O Father, You have laid
On Christ, Your Son, my Savior.
Lord Jesus, You my debt have paid
And gained for me God's favor.
O Holy Spirit, Fount of grace,

The good in me to You I trace;
In faith and hope preserve me.

Johann Heermann (1585-1647)

The Majestic God Loves His Son

“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”
John 3:35.

Love in the Bible is the foundation of harmonious relationships in heaven and in earth. One has said that the love of the Father for His Son is far “too deep for man to fathom.” Yet the Lord in revealing this fact wants us to know of His love for His Son though we are very limited in our understanding of such divine truth. The members of the Godhead do not need this to be revealed but it is for our benefit. “The depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” are “unsearchable” and “His ways past finding out” (Rom. 8:33). “It is an expression graciously accommodated to man’s feeble understanding, and intended to signify that most intimate and ineffable union which exists between the First and Second Persons in the blessed Trinity, and the entire approbation and complacency which the Father regards the work of redemption undertaken by the Son” [J. C. Ryle]. In our text we have *a declaration*, “The Father loveth the Son,” and we have *a gift*, “The Father ... hath given all things into his hand.” Yes, everything is devoted to the Son by the Father even the judgment. Everyone and everything will ultimately be at His feet.

The Son of God is the object of the love of God the Father (John 3:35). This word love, *agapaō*, is the divine kind of love. This is unending love which the Father shows His Son! This word for love is a word which was derived from Christianity. The pagan Greeks had no concept of self-sacrificial love as found in the NT. This love prizes the worthiness of that which is loved. *Negatively*, it does not refer to an impulsive feeling or inward feelings called emotions. There are words in the Bible that express emotions such as compassion, pity, etc. but not this word. *Positively*, this kind of love is based on the mind being set upon the object loved. Such love is a quality that is observable in the conduct and is not static. To summarize this word refers to the motive of a person’s action. *Agapaō* is the word that describes the attitude of God the Father toward God the Son. This word also is expressive of the person of God, and is always expressed in the activity or behavior of a person toward the person loved whether God or man. Love is expressed in action. There are two characteristics of this love: its selflessness and commitment.

The Father loved His Son from the foundation of the world or eternally, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the

world” (John 17:24). And also, the Father said in time, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

Jesus’ love for the Father was manifested, “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence” (John 14:31). Earlier Jesus said, “I am in my Father” (v. 20), “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (v. 21), “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him” (v.23), “I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I” (v. 28), and then Jesus wanted the world to know that He loved the Father who also loved Him.

The Father’s love manifested itself the way the Son loves us, “And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26). The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Father, the Father loves those who are *in* Christ, the Father loves them *as* He loves His Son. “That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:23). The little word “as” shows the likeness of the love toward others.

The Son of God is also loved by the Father for the sacrifice He made, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). Jesus noted that His Father loved His obedience, substitutionary atonement and resurrection victory. “But as He became flesh on our account, and as the Father delighted in Him, in order that He might reconcile us to Himself, we need not wonder if He declares it to be the reason why *the Father loveth Him*, that our salvation is dearer to Him than His own life. This is a wonderful commendation of the goodness of God to us, and ought justly to arouse our whole souls into rapturous admiration, that not only does God extend to us the love which is due to the only begotten Son, but He refers it to us as the final cause. And indeed, there was no necessity that Christ should take upon Him our flesh, in which He was *beloved*, but that it might be the pledge of the mercy of *His Father* in redeeming us” [Calvin]. “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love” (15:9). Christ Jesus loves us as His Father loved Him. He wants us to persevere in this love.

The Son of God has been gifted with all things from the Father, “The Father ... hath given all things into his hand” (John 3:35). God’s eternal love of His Son results in God giving to His Son all of His creation in its final form, the new heavens, the new earth, the redeemed humanity, the desires of His heart will be met; these are love gifts to the Son. Jesus said that “All power was given unto me in heaven and in earth.” He also said, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father....” Yes, all the power to do what He will, and all things to do with as He will, were gifted to Him by His Father. All knees bowing in compliance, all tongues in harmony confessing His Lordship!

John Calvin commented, “*The Father loveth the Son*. But what is the meaning of this reason? Does He regard all others with hatred? The answer is easy, that He does not speak of the common love with which God regards men whom He has created, or His other works, but of that peculiar love which, beginning with the Son, flows from Him to all the creatures. For that love with which, embracing the Son, He embraces us also in Him, leads Him to communicate all His benefits to us by His hand.”