

Nature and the Bible both tell us of God's love. Our Father in heaven gives us life, wisdom, and joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of the many ways they provide for the needs and happiness of all living creatures.

The sunshine and rain tell of our Creator's love. The hills, seas, and plains speak of Him. He supplies the daily needs of every creature. In the beautiful Psalms David wrote of God:

"All living things look hopefully to you, and you give them food when they need it. You give them enough and satisfy the needs of all"  
(Psalm 145:15, 16).

God made Adam and Eve perfectly holy and happy. The earth was beautiful as it came from the Creator's hand. Nothing was spoiled or dying. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God's law—His law of love. Disobedience brought sadness and death. Yet God showed His love even when sin was causing suffering.

The Bible says that God cursed the ground for the good of human beings (Genesis 3:17). He permitted thorns and weeds to grow. He allowed trials and troubles to fill people's lives with work and care. These troubles were to help lift men and women out of the ruin and shame caused by sin. But this sinful world is not all sorrow and pain. Nature itself gives us messages of hope and comfort. Flowers grow on the weeds, and roses cover the thorns.

The fact that "God is love" is shown by every opening flower and blade of grass. Lovely birds singing their happy songs tell us of God's tender care. The bright flowers that sweeten the air and the tall green trees of the forest remind us that He wants to make His children happy.

The Bible shows us God's character. God Himself has told us of His everlasting love and pity. When Moses prayed, "Show me thy glory," the

Lord answered, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee" (Exodus 33:18, 19, KJV). God's goodness is His glory.

The Lord passed before Moses and said, "I, the Lord, am a God who is full of compassion and pity, who is not easily angered and who shows great love and faithfulness. I keep my promise for thousands of generations and forgive evil and sin" (Exodus 34:6, 7). God is "always patient, always kind," showing us His constant love (Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:18).

God has drawn our hearts to Him through various means. Through nature and the deepest and tenderest love that human hearts can know, He has tried to tell us about Himself. Yet these do not perfectly show His love.

Even though God has given us all these evidences, Satan, the enemy of good, has blinded people's minds, so that they look upon God with fear, and they think of Him as hard and unforgiving. Satan tries to make people think of God as a severe judge without pity. He says that the Creator is always watching for people to make mistakes so He can punish them. To show them that this is not true, Jesus came to live in this world. He wanted people to see God's infinite love.

The Son of God came from heaven to give people a clear picture of the Father. "No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (John 1:18). "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11:27).

When one of Jesus' disciples said, "Show us the Father," Jesus answered, "For a long time I have been with you all; yet you do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Why, then, do you say, 'Show us the Father?'" (John 14:8, 9).

Jesus talked about His work on this earth. He said the Lord "has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed" (Luke 4:18). This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all who were made sick by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not one cry of pain, for He had gone through and healed all the sick.

The work of Jesus showed that He was sent from heaven. Love, mercy, and pity were shown in every act of His life. His heart was touched with tender love for people.

God's Son became a human being so that He could help people. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to come to Him. Even little children wanted to be near Him. They loved to climb up on His knees and look into His thoughtful, loving face.

Jesus did not keep back one word of truth, but He always spoke with love. He was gentle, kind, and thoughtful to others. He was never rude and never spoke more severely than necessary. He never hurt anyone. He did not scold people for their weaknesses. He told the truth, but always in love.

He spoke against insincerity, unbelief, and sin, but sadness was in His voice when He had to speak sharply. Jesus cried over the city He loved, because it would not receive Him as the way, the truth, and the life. The people had turned against their Saviour, but He looked on them with tender pity.

Jesus did not live to please Himself, but He had thoughtful care for others. Every person was precious in His sight. He looked with tender love on every member of God's family. He saw all human beings as people who needed to be saved.

The life Jesus lived shows us His character. His life also shows us God's character. Rivers of heavenly love flow out from the heart of God to us through His Son. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God, who "appeared in human form" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Jesus lived and suffered and died to save us. He became a "Man of sorrows" so that we could share in everlasting joy. God let His dear Son leave the glory of heaven and come to a world spoiled by sin. He let Him come to a world dark with the shadow of death. He let His precious Son leave His presence and the worship of the angels. He let Him suffer shame, hate, and death. But "we are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received" (Isaiah 53:5).

See Jesus in the desert, in Gethsemane, and upon the cross! The perfect Son of God took upon Himself the weight of sin. He had been one with God, but on the cross He felt the awful separation sin makes between God and man. It forced from His lips the cry of pain, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" (Matthew 27:46). It was the weight of sin, its terrible power to separate a sinner from God, that broke His heart.

But the Son of God did not give His life to make His Father love us. He did not die to make God willing to save. No, no! "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

The Father loves us not because Christ died for us; He gave His Son to die because He loved us. Through Christ God poured out His infinite love upon a sinful world. "God was making all human beings his friends through Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19). God suffered with His Son. In the pain of Gethsemane and the death on the cross, God paid the price to save us.

Jesus said, "The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive it back again" (John 10:17). That is, "My

Father has loved you so much that He loves Me even more for giving My life to redeem you. I died in your place, taking your sins. Because I did this, I am closer to My Father than before, for now God can be just and still save sinners who believe in Me.”

Only the Son of God could save us. Only He who was one with God the Father could tell us about Him. Only He who knew how high and how deep God's love was could show it. Nothing but Christ's great sacrifice for us could make known how much the Father loves sinners.

“God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son” (John 3:16). He gave Christ to live among men, to take their liabilities and their sins, and to die for them. God gave His Son to this world. By becoming a man, Christ would know how human beings felt and what they needed. He was one with God, but He will always be joined to the human race. “Jesus is not ashamed to call them his family” (Hebrews 2:11).

Jesus is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, standing in human form before His Father's throne. In His human form He will forever be one with the race He has saved. He is the Son of man. And He did all this to lift us from the ruin of sin, so that we might reflect the love of God and share the joy of godly living.

In giving His Son to die for us, our heavenly Father made a great sacrifice and paid a high price to redeem us. Such a great price should help us understand what God hopes we may become through Christ.

The apostle John saw how high, deep, and broad is God's love. John wanted to tell about it, but he could not find the right words to describe it, so he said, “See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children” (1 John 3:1). What a high value this places upon us!

By sinning, human beings became subjects of Satan. But through faith in Christ and His death, they may become God's children. By taking human

nature, Christ places sinners where, through connection with Him, they may become worthy of the name "children of God."

There is no other love like His. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! How wonderful to think about the great love of God for a world that did not love Him!

Thinking of God's love makes us feel very humble. This thought, as shown by Jesus' death, should bring our minds close to God. The more we study the character of God and keep looking at the cross, the more we see God's mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness. We also see how fair He is and how just. We see His infinite love and a tender pity that is far greater than the sympathy of a mother for her disobedient child.