

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

We have considered the total depravity of sinful man outside of Christ, and we have considered God's eternal election of those who are to be saved. Tonight the eyes of our minds are directed towards the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the subject that we are considering is the doctrine of Particular Redemption. Or to bring out the meaning of that phrase, we can put it like this:

What was the purpose of Christ in becoming flesh and dying on the cross? Did He come with some general purpose of simply making salvation available, but He leaves it up to each one of us to apply that salvation to ourselves and make it actual? Or did Christ come, not to make salvation merely available, but actually to save? Did He take flesh and die, in order effectively, successfully, definitely, and triumphantly to set us free from all the powers of sin, death, Satan, and hell?

And if this was His purpose, who are the people that He intended to liberate, and actually to save? Everyone? Clearly not everyone; that would overthrow the doctrine of election. God's eternal sovereign purpose is the salvation of those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. So the Scriptures teach. Therefore, in taking our flesh and dying our death, the purpose of Christ was that by so doing, He would save all those given to Him by His Father in the

mystery of election. Thus there was particularity of purpose in the saving work of Christ. He came into the world, not just to make salvation generally available, but actually, sovereignly, and victoriously to save His elect people from their sins, and take them triumphantly up to heaven and glory.

The view that Christ came in order to make salvation universally available to everyone in general, but actually and infallibly to save no one in particular, has often historically been called General Redemption. The Reformed view, that Christ came with a specific purpose of actually saving the elect, is often called Particular Redemption. Sometimes Particular Redemption is called Limited Atonement. I dislike the phrase for two reasons. First, it is needlessly negative. After all, not everyone goes to heaven; but do we go about proclaiming our enthusiastic belief in Limited Heaven? Surely not. Second, “Limited Atonement” may suggest in the minds of some that there is some limit to the value or sufficiency of Christ’s atonement; but as I shall argue, there is no such limit.

I therefore much prefer to say Particular Redemption. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ has a particular purpose in coming among us as a Redeemer. His redemptive mission has particular people in view. He intends to redeem a particular company of persons. The Son of God does not intend just to make some general provision of redemption, which does not in fact redeem anyone in itself, but leaves it finally in our own hands to receive or to reject, so that our actual redemption hinges on us and our own wills. No: the

Second Person of the Trinity becomes man, and lives and dies and rises again, with a sovereign particularity of purpose: to redeem - actually and efficaciously to redeem - His elect, all those given to Him in eternity by God His Father to be His Church, His people, His flock, His bride. That was the great purpose in Christ's mind and heart; that was the driving force, so to speak, behind his incarnation, His obedient life, and His atoning death - to save His chosen ones.

Once again, let us grasp the connection between the different points that are being made in each sermon in this series. If it is true that fallen human beings are spiritually dead in sin, then there is no possibility of self-salvation; salvation can only be the work of God. And if salvation is God's work, it is God's choice; as we saw last time, God only acts because He chooses to act. His actions are simply His choices put into effect. My experience of salvation, then, is rooted in God's choice to save me. Man's depravity and God's election go together. I cannot save myself; God saves me; God chooses to save me; and His choice is unconditional and free (it must be, since there is nothing I can do in my depravity to provoke God, as it were, to choose me).

Particular Redemption follows on from these two previous points. If God has from all eternity, in the mystery of His timeless love, elected those spiritually dead sinners who are to be saved, then the salvation of those people must surely be the purpose of Christ in His incarnation and death. Election by itself does not save anyone; election is God

choosing who shall be saved. But if they are to be saved, atonement must be made for their sins. Therefore, the Son of God, in whom the elect are eternally chosen, becomes flesh in order to make that atonement. He comes with the purpose of accomplishing the salvation for which the elect are chosen. Here, then, is the doctrine of Particular Redemption, in its close bond of togetherness with the doctrines of Total Depravity and Unconditional Election. The three are woven together; they have a consistency and a coherence with each other. Not that we believe them for that reason; we believe them because they are biblical. But wherever we can see the consistency of biblical doctrines with each other, it strengthens our grasp on those doctrines, and helps to reassure us that we have understood them aright.

Our confession of faith, the 1689 Baptist Confession, says this on Particular Redemption: “The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.”

Here was the purpose of Christ’s advent in the flesh and sacrifice on the cross: to satisfy divine justice, procure reconciliation, and purchase heaven for those given to Him by the Father - given, that is, from eternity, in the mystery of election and predestination. So our Confession teaches.

Now let us ask whether there is a biblical basis for this doctrine. Our main text is from Paul's letter to the Ephesians; as I have said, we will be expounding all the five points of Calvinism from Ephesians, in order to give us a convenient point of reference. Let us turn then to **Ephesians 5:25-27**: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

We see several things here. First, Paul likens the relationship between husband and wife to that between Christ and the Church. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ has loved the Church. By the Church, Paul of course does not mean an ecclesiastical organisation; he means the people of God, all those whom God chooses and calls to Himself to be His saved ones, His sons and daughters by adoption. There is, then, a special relationship of love between Christ and the Church. Christ loves the Church; He is the Bridegroom, she is the Bride. We find the same teaching in **John 3:28-29**. When the disciples of John the Baptist were jealous that people were now flocking to Christ instead of John, the Baptist rebuked them for their foolish jealousy. It was only right, he said, that people should flock to Christ. Verses 28-9: "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's

voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.” Christ is the Bridegroom; believers are His Bride; therefore they rightly hear the Bridegroom’s voice and cleave to Him.

We already see, then, that Christ has a particular people, His Bride, His Church, whom He loves in a particular way. Christ is not married to all mankind, but to the Church. He has but one Bride, to whom He is committed in the bonds of a heavenly marriage covenant; and that Bride is not the world in general, but His chosen people. And how does Christ express His love for His Bride? How does He love His Beloved in action and in practice? “Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it [perhaps ‘for her’ would be better, given the marriage analogy]; that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish.”

Christ the heavenly Bridegroom expresses His love for His Bride by dying for her. He loves her and gives Himself for her. And the purpose behind His giving Himself for her is to save her: “that He might sanctify and cleanse her and present her to Himself as a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.” We see here very clearly the particularity of purpose in the atoning death of Christ. He does not merely have a general love which inspires Him to die in general sense for people in general; He has a particular love which inspires Him to die in a particular sense for His Bride, the Church. When the Son of God was dying on the cross,

freely and sovereignly offering Himself up as an atoning sacrifice, His intention was to save His Bride. His driving purpose was to deliver His Beloved from all the forces that were threatening her well-being: to liberate His Church from her own sin, and from all the terrible consequences of sin - slavery to Satan, the sundering of soul and body in death, and the eternal ruin of the soul after death.

That is what we mean by Particular Redemption. It is simply a shorthand way of speaking about the love Christ has for His chosen people, the special bond between them as Bridegroom and Bride, and the sacrifice of the Bridegroom whereby He dies for love of His Bride in order to save her from sin, death, and hell, so that He and she might be united in blissful fellowship for ever. The Saviour, then, has a particular object of love in His atoning work - His Bride the Church. And He does not die intending merely to make salvation available to her, but intending to save her - to rescue her actually, effectually, certainly, infallibly, and victoriously from all her sins and all their consequences.

Such, then, is the apostle Paul's depiction of the relationship between Christ and His people in Eph.5. Are there any other passages in the Bible that speak of a particular purpose in the work of Christ - an intention to save particular people, rather than just a general aim of making salvation generally available? Let me draw your attention to a number of other verses.

Matthew 1:21 "You shall call His name JESUS, for He

will save His people from their sins.” The angel announces to Joseph not only the name of the virgin Mary’s child, but also the purpose behind His birth. He has come in order to save His people from their sins. Not to save everyone, for not everyone is saved, but to save “His people” - the people given to Him by His heavenly Father in the timeless mystery of election. There is particularity in the Saviour’s mission. He is born to save His people.

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.” The Lord Jesus Christ compares Himself to a Shepherd. He has a flock of sheep committed to His care, and for these sheep He will give His life. But not everyone belongs to this flock; for as Christ goes on to say to some stubbornly hostile Jews, “you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep” (**John 10:26**). So again we see particularity of purpose. Christ the Shepherd does not die to save those who are not of His sheep, but those who are. He lays down His life specifically to redeem the souls committed to His pastoral care by the Father - in other words, the elect.

John 13:1 “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” With the death of the Saviour fully in view and about to take place, John tells us that Christ has loved His own who are in the world, and now loves them to the end - that is, carries His love for them to the final extent of dying for them. John Gill comments:

“The objects of His love are described by His property in them, ‘His own’; by whom are meant, not all mankind, who are His by creation; nor the Jews, who were His nation and countrymen according to the flesh; nor the twelve apostles only, whom He had chosen; but all the elect of God, who are His own, by His choice of them, by the Father’s gift of them to Him, by the purchase He made of them with His blood, and by His effectual call of them by His grace... ‘He loved them to the end’: which He showed by dying for them; and continues to show by interceding for them in heaven, by supplying them with all grace, and by preserving them from a final and total falling away.”

So again we see particularity of purpose. Christ loves His own people who are in the world, and loves them to the end, to the full measure of love, by giving His life to redeem them.

Acts 20:28 “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul describes the Church as a flock of sheep, for whom elders have pastoral oversight, and says that God has purchased this Church with His own blood. The death of Christ was a kind of transaction in which He paid His life as a price, thereby purchasing something for Himself; and the property He purchased at so costly a price was the Church. So once again we see a particular design in Christ’s work of salvation. He lays down His precious life in order to obtain

for Himself the Church - to have His chosen people as His own personal possession, delivered from sin and filled with His Spirit.

Hebrews 2:10 “It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Christ is described here as the captain of salvation, sent forth by God His Father to bring a company of people to glory. But which people? The sons of God. “In bringing many sons to glory.” Those foreknown and predestined to be sons of God: these are the people to whom Christ is given as a captain of salvation. And how does He save them? By suffering for them. “To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” By His suffering on the cross, Christ is equipped as a perfect Saviour to bring the sons of God to glory. He has atoned for all their sins; nothing in all creation can now stand in the way of this great captain in leading His people to the glory of heaven. Once again, particularity of purpose.

Hebrews 2:17 “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” Here we are told two things about those for whom Christ dies. First, they are His brethren: His brothers and sisters, bound together with Him in one family. This is not the human race, but the elect family of God. As Christ Himself is depicted as saying in **Hebrews 2:12**, “I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” The

assembly - that is, the spiritual assembly of worshippers, rather than mankind in general.

And second, we are told that Christ as the great High Priest makes propitiation for the sins of the people. (The AV says “reconciliation”, but that is a weak translation; the Greek word is clearly “propitiation”, a sacrifice that takes away divine wrath.) But the High Priest of Israel, from whom the imagery here is taken, did not on the day of atonement offer sacrifice to atone for the sins of all mankind, but only of God’s elect people Israel. Likewise Christ, the true High Priest, offers an atoning sacrifice, not to wash effectually away the sins of all mankind, but the sins of God’s elect people, the true Israel, those chosen from eternity. And so again we see a well-defined particularity of purpose in the atoning work of Christ. As High Priest, He makes propitiation for His brethren, the true Israel of God, the elect.

All these passages, then, reveal a special design, a definite purpose, in the redemptive mission of the Son of God. He has not taken flesh and died in order merely to make salvation generally available, but to bring about the actual salvation of His elect people, with infallible and triumphant certainty. That is the doctrine of Particular Redemption.

Now let us consider some further points. First, what about the texts of Scripture that speak of Christ the Saviour doing something for the world or for all men? What, for example, about **John 3:16**, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not

perish but have everlasting life”? And what about **1 Timothy 2:5-6**, “there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all”? Do such verses and others like them tell against the doctrine of Particular Redemption?

There are two things to bear in mind here. First, the doctrine of Particular Redemption rests on its own evidence, such as the texts we have looked at. We cannot disregard them. They clearly teach particularity. What we must try to do is interpret Scripture in harmony with Scripture. So the true question is how we harmonise the passages that speak of Particular Redemption with the passages that ascribe some sort of universality to Christ’s work.

Second, then, we have to be careful how we interpret terms like “world” and “all”. They do not necessarily mean “absolutely all human beings without exception”. Think, for example, of the prophecy of **Joel 2:28**, “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.” This is quoted by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost. All flesh - it seems an absolutely universal reference to the whole human race without exception. But has God poured out His Holy Spirit on absolutely all human beings without exception? Is that what “all flesh” means? Obviously not. The Pentecostal fulfilment of Joel’s prophecy was found in the outpouring of the Spirit on those who believed in Jesus. So “all flesh” cannot mean “absolutely all human beings without exception”. In context, “all flesh” can only mean “believers from every

tribe and tongue and people and nation”: not the whole world absolutely, but the people of God from every nation of the world. The phrase “all flesh” is, in fact, highlighting the international character of the Church under the New Covenant. Now that Christ has come, God gives His Spirit not only to Jews but to all flesh - that is, to all throughout the world who believe, Gentile as well as Jew.

Now if a seemingly universal phrase like “all flesh” must mean “people from throughout the world”, and not “absolutely all people without exception”, we see that we have to exercise great caution and prudence in interpreting such phrases. Just because we discover the term “all” or “world” attached to the work of Christ, we must not leap to the conclusion that there is no particularity of purpose in the Saviour’s mission.

How then should we interpret verses like Jn.3:16 and 1 Tim.2:5-6? Let us take the Timothy text first. It is a good specimen of a passage that applies the word “all” to the work of Christ. “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.” What can “a ransom for all” mean, consistently with the particular purpose of the atonement? There are several possibilities. It could mean a ransom for all the elect, all God’s people, all who are to be saved, all believers, all the sons of God. It could mean a ransom for all kinds of people - rich and poor, king and subject, master and slave, young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile - people of all sorts, from every class and category.

Or it could mean a ransom that is, in itself, sufficient for all. Although Christ sovereignly intended the actual salvation of His elect in His death, yet His death itself is quite sufficient in its own nature to save any and every sinner. Had God intended to save absolutely all human beings without exception, Christ would not have had to suffer anything more than He did suffer. Had God in His sovereignty chosen to apply His Son's death to more sinners than actually receive it, the death that Christ died would, in itself, be quite sufficient for that, perfectly equal to the task, needing no supplement.

This is why John Calvin and most other Reformed theologians have said that the Saviour's atoning death is "sufficient for all, but efficient for the elect". *Sufficient* for all: what Christ did is in itself adequate to save any and every human being to whom it may be applied, whether that means ten souls, ten million, or ten million times ten million. *Efficient* for the elect: what Christ did results in the actual salvation of the elect, because such was, from all eternity, the sovereign purpose and design of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the work of atonement; and the sovereign purpose of the Triune God, to save His chosen ones by the cross of Christ, cannot be frustrated or defeated.

Incidentally, the universal sufficiency of Christ's death is important for the preaching of the Gospel. We may and should tell any and every sinner, regardless of the mystery of election, that there is a sufficiency, an adequacy of

atoning power in Jesus Christ, to save him, if only he will come to Christ. Just as, if a great fire were kindled on a small island during a freezing cold night, that fire would be strong enough to warm every person on the island who came to the fire. There is nothing in the fire itself to prevent anyone being warmed; and there is nothing in the Saviour's atonement itself to prevent anyone being saved. The limitation lies in the absence of contact between the person and the fire, between the soul and the Saviour.

But if any human soul in the world will come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, he will find an abundant sufficiency of power in Christ to save him from all his sins. Election in that sense is neither here nor there. On the impossible supposition that a non-elect sinner came to Christ, he would be saved. For God looks upon His Son's death as justifying all who are in union with Christ by faith; and therefore, even though I were not elect, if I trusted in Christ, I would still find myself justified by His blood. Not of course that the non-elect will ever come to Christ; but I am simply making the point that there is nothing in the actual atonement of Christ that hinders or prevents anyone being saved. As the Synod of Dort says, where the five points of Calvinism were first officially drafted: "Whereas many who are called by the Gospel do not repent, nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief, this is not owing to any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice offered by Christ upon the cross, but is wholly to be imputed to themselves."

So then, the atoning death of the Saviour is sufficient for all, efficient for the elect. By His cross, Christ is able to

save to the uttermost all sinners and any sinner without exception in the world, who will but come to God through Him; and by His cross, He does actually save, infallibly, certainly, and efficaciously, His elect, who do come to God through Him, in accordance with His sovereign purpose from all eternity.

As for references to the “world” in relation to Christ, they can be taken along the same lines as “all flesh”, meaning all the people of God throughout the world, rather than every single person in the world. In fact, there is often an emphasis on the Gentiles when Scripture speaks of “the world”. For example, when Paul says in **Romans 11:11-12**: “I say then, have they [that is, the Jews] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!” Here Paul uses the term “world” to mean the Gentiles. He does this again in **Romans 11:15**: “For if their [the Jews’] being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” So as against the narrowness of the Old Covenant, where salvation was largely restricted to the Jews, in the New Covenant salvation extends to the world - that is, to all Gentiles who believe. We may then often take “world” as a reference, not to every single person in the world, but to all believers throughout the world, especially Gentiles.

A good example is **2 Corinthians 5:19**: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing

their trespasses to them.” We can hardly understand the world here as every single person in the world. Does God no longer impute anyone’s trespasses to them, regardless of faith or repentance? Is every single person reconciled to God? That would contradict the rest of Scripture. “World” here is best understood as the multitude of God’s people spread throughout the world: all believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation - the world of the new humanity. As Arthur Pink comments on this verse:

“What is meant by this is clearly defined in the words immediately following, ‘not imputing *their* trespasses unto them.’ Here again, ‘the world’ *cannot* mean ‘the world of the ungodly’, for *their* ‘trespasses’ *are* ‘imputed’ to them, as the judgment of the Great White Throne will yet show. But 2 Corinthians 5:19 plainly teaches there *is* a ‘world’ which *are* ‘reconciled’, reconciled unto God, because their trespasses are *not* reckoned to their account, having been borne by their Substitute. Who then are they? Only one answer is fairly possible—the world of God’s people!”

We must, then, exercise great care in interpreting the term “world” in the Bible. Often it does not mean “everyone in the world”, but has a less expansive meaning. Having said this, however, sometimes there seems little doubt that we *should* take “world” to mean “everyone in the world”. And there is no reason why Jn.3:16 should not be taken that way, as it is (for example) by John Calvin himself, and by other great Reformed interpreters like Matthew Henry, J.C.Ryle, and the illustrious Robert Lewis Dabney (a man whose writings ought to be treasured by all lovers of

Reformed doctrine). We may understand Jn.3:16 to be saying that God has loved all mankind to this extent, that He has given His Son - sent Him as a Saviour - with the universal promise that any of mankind who will believe in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. In that sense, we may say there is a manifestation of divine love to all sinners in the death of Christ. Any sinner, in the depth of his sin, may look upon Christ crucified, and see there a love that is offering him salvation. As Matthew Henry comments:

“Though many of the world of mankind perish, yet God's giving His only-begotten Son was an instance of His love to the whole world, because through Him there is a general offer of life and salvation made to all. It is love to the revolted rebellious province to issue out a proclamation of pardon and indemnity to all that will come in, plead it upon their knees, and return to their allegiance. So far God loved the apostate lapsed world that He sent His Son with this fair proposal, that whosoever believes in Him, one or other, shall not perish.”

All of this is quite consistent with the particular purpose of God in the atonement. The One whom Christ called “heavenly Father” intended two things in the death of His Son: one, to send forth an offer of salvation to all sinners; two, actually to save elect sinners. Both of these purposes have been accomplished in the cross. From Calvary, there flows out a universal offer, a fair proposal of mercy to the world, and God sovereignly intended that it should be so; but likewise at Calvary, the salvation of the elect was

infallibly sealed and completely secured - and God sovereignly intended this too. In this way, I would suggest, we can see the harmony of Jn.3:16 with the truth of Particular Redemption.

That leads me to say this. We must not so insist on Particular Redemption that we cramp or mutilate the universal invitations of the Gospel. Balance is necessary. On the one hand, it is true that Christ did not die merely to make salvation available, but actually and effectively to save His people. That is a precious biblical truth. But on the other hand, it is also true that the death of Christ does make salvation generally available in the free offer of the Gospel; and that too was part of God's purpose in His Son's death. In the light of this, we may once again gather that the atoning death of Christ was intended to accomplish two objectives. Firstly, the cross laid a basis for the Gospel offer to all sinners in the world: Christ is now available to them as a Saviour, and is theirs for the having, if they will but believe. And at the same time, secondly, the cross rendered absolutely certain the salvation of the elect. How? Because God unconditionally decreed to accept His Son's death as effectually covering their sins. If we keep these things in mind, it may help us to interpret fairly some of the passages of Scripture that teach a universal reference in Christ's death, consistently with the passages that teach a particular reference.

How shall we conclude? Let me speak both to those who are not yet Christians, and to those who are. First, those who are not yet Christians, not yet looking to Christ for

salvation. You should be encouraged by the truth of Particular Redemption. Think of it: Christ's death has infallibly secured the everlasting salvation of the elect. And what is the sign, the birthmark, of election? Faith in Christ. If then you come to Christ, and rely on Him to save you from sin, death, and hell, you can have the assurance that so trusting Him, your salvation is infallibly secured. There will be no ifs or buts, no qualifications or reservations. Everyone who calls on Jesus Christ for salvation is assured of it: because He died, not just to make salvation available to His people, but to save them - to save them from all their sins, and all the consequences of their sins - to save them perfectly, completely, absolutely, efficaciously, for time and for eternity, with no question of their ever being lost, or any possibility of their being anything other than saved. What more could you ask for in a Saviour? Is He not worthy of your confidence?

As for those who do trust in Christ: let us ponder what the Saviour has done for us. When He came into the world, when He suffered on the cross, I in particular was in His mind, in His heart. He loved me in particular with a love that was utterly intent on saving me. He knew all about my future sins: my failures, my follies, my disgraces, my backsliding, my coldness, my barrenness, my half-heartedness, my sloth, my unworthiness, my fickleness, my compromises, my hypocrisy, my impenitence, my unbelief; yet knowing all this in all its shameful darkness, the almighty Son of God loved me in particular, gave Himself on Calvary for me in particular, and thereby secured my infallible salvation - the forgiveness of all my sorry mass of

sins, my sanctification into something better, my preservation by divine power amid all outward trials and all inward struggles for a glorious destination at last in His Father's kingdom. Is there any love in the universe like this love? Can there be any love like Christ's love for His people, His chosen Bride?

My song is love unknown,
 My Saviour's love to me,
Love to the loveless shown
 That they might lovely be.
 O who am I
 That for my sake
My Lord should take
 Frail flesh and die?

May God enable us increasingly to grasp the width and length and depth and height of this love, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.