

"GOD'S GREAT LOVE"**Introduction**

1. A great chapter on Christian privilege
2. A very sweet view of God!
3. God will have His kindness noted.

1. THE CHARACTER OF GOD EXHIBITED

- 1) "Rich in mercy":
 - (i) God is slow to punish: 120 years to Flood / 40 years after Crucifixion / delaying Second Coming (2 Peter 3)
 - (ii) offers escape from punishment: Ark / Rahab...
 - (iii) prefers men to repent than suffer: Ezekiel 18
 - (iv) delights in mercy: Luke 15

OBSERVE: How wonderful! How different from other "gods"!
APPLICATION: We too should be merciful
- 2) This rich mercy wonderfully displayed in Bible:
 - (i) God's self-revelation to Moses: Exodus 34
 - (ii) rich promises of pardon:
 - (iii) the "worst" made the best: e.g. Paul
 - (iv) compassion to the weak: poor, widow, fatherless...
 - (v) even care for the birds' nests

3) APPLICATION

- (i) God's people are to reflect this rich mercy
- (ii) Especially in kindness + forgiveness.
Illustration: G. Wishart

2. BELIEVERS MUST NOT DOUBT GOD'S LOVE

- 1) "for his great love wherewith he loved us"

- 2) Reason why they sometimes doubt it:
 - (i) when in difficult circumstances: Job
 - (ii) when they fail to balance time + eternity
 - (iii) when they forget what God has done for them
 - (iv) when they allow their mood or temperament to speak louder than God's grace to them
- 3) The penalty for doubting God's love:
 - (i) assurance is weakened
 - (ii) joy is abated
 - (iii) God is not enjoyed so well
 - (iv) the soul feels estranged from God

ILLUSTRATION: when friends fall out
- 4) Signs of a believer estranged from God
 - (i) secret prayer: a burdensome duty
 - (ii) no delight in heart-religion
 - (iii) hearty fellowship is unwelcome

APPLICATION: When these are seen in your soul, you should recognize the root problem – Doubt of God's great love
- 5) The remedy:
 - (i) meditation on God's love to you
 - (ii) put the balance of your life right

APPLICATION: We must not lose our "first love"

3. GOD'S LOVE TO BELIEVERS IS SHOWN IN ACTIONS

- 1) God's love the cause of every saving act:
 - (i) The first impression of our need: "the pricks"
 - (ii) The "quickening" – a work of creative power
 - (iii) The pardon of all our sins: past and future
 - (iv) Elevation into a sphere of grace
 - (v) Creation unto good works
 - (vi) An honoured place in the Body of Christ
 - (vii) The promise of a sure reward
- 2) Believers should also show their love by practical actions:
 - (i) Be as spiritual as you can

- (ii) Cultivate edifying conversation
ILLUSTRATION: Pilgrim's Progress
- (iii) Avoid strife + contention as far as possible. Exception:
where the truth of God is under attack
- (iv) Remember where you are going to.

CONCLUSION

Illustration: 2 Christians who met in a bookshop!

<p>PSALM</p> <p>103: 8 – 13</p> <p>145²: 9 – 16</p> <p>31: 21 – 24</p>
