Sola Caritas: Love Alone

**Introduction**

The common conception is that the God of Calvinism is unfair and malicious.

The answer to the Westminster Shorter Catechism’s first question is frequently misunderstood: *Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*

What motivates God to glorify Himself in creation, providence, redemption and judgment?

**Thesis: Love is God’s adorable motivation behind all that He does.**

Central Text: *God is love* (1 John 4:8, 16)

**1. The Objects of God’s Love**

He hates, in some sense, the wicked (Psalm 5:5-6; 11:5). He has a general love for mankind (Romans 2:4; Titus 3:4) and a special love for His elect people (1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

A. God loves *His Son* more than He loves any creature

i. God delights most in the most *attractive Being*

(Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 3:17; 17:5)

ii. God is most benevolent to Him who has the greatest *share of being*

 (John 3:34-35; 5:26)

B. God loves *righteousness*—He is in harmony with His own character
(Psalm 11:7)

C. God created and loves *the elect* because He loves His Son
(Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:10-11)

D. God’s love for the elect is the highest *display of His glory*
(Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:4-7).

**2. God’s Love and the Plan of Salvation**

God’s plan *maximizes* the out-pouring of His love

A. Scriptural background

i. The holy angels are *elect* (Mark 8:38; 1 Timothy 5:20)

ii. Elect people are to be *higher than angels*

1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 1:13-14; 2:5-16

iii. How to *make creatures* higher than the elect, holy angels?

B. The plan chosen by God—redemption

 God pours out His love to the max by choosing to save particular undeserving, helpless, rebels, from the greatest possible disaster, at the highest possible cost to Himself, for the greatest possible blessing.

i. God’s electing love—*the darkness of our sin*

ii. The greatest possible disaster—*eternity in Hell*

iii. The highest possible cost to Himself—*the sacrifice of Christ*

iv. The greatest possible blessing—*union with God*

(John 17:22-26)

**3. God’s love in relation to sin and judgment**

A. God’s love in *permitting* the fall

i. *Incomplete* answers: free will; training; glory and joy; appreciation for Heaven

ii. A sinless world would not need *Christ’s sacrifice*

iii. A sinless world would not *crucify Christ*

B. God’s love in His *punishment* of sin

i. God’s wrath is an expression of His love for *His Son* and for *righteousness* (Psalm 2)

ii. There is a *fitness* between the destinies of the saved and the lost

iii. Eternal *rebellion* merits eternal *punishment*

iv. An *hypothetical Hell* is not consistent with a *real redemption*

v. God *endures* sinners for the sake of the elect

(Romans 9:22-24)

vi. God *grieves* over the necessity of judging

 (Isaiah 15:5; 16:9-11; Ezekiel 33:11; Luke 19:41-44)

C. The love of God displayed in Hell

i. God is both *absent* and *present* in Hell

 (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:10-11)

ii. The wicked hate *God’s Son* and *God’s people*

(Psalm 83:2-5; John 15:18-25)

iii. The glory of *God’s love* is hateful to the unredeemed

iv. The glory of God’s wrath and of His love *are one*

**4. God’s Love and the Christian Life**

God reproduces His love in and through us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. How is the Holy Spirit related to love?

A. The Holy Spirit is the *Love* of God (as Christ is the *Word* of God)

Galatians 5:13-14, 22-23; Ephesians 4:2-3; 1 John 3:24; 4:12-13, 16

B. The outpouring of the *Spirit* is the outpouring of *God’s love* within our hearts Romans 5:3-5

C. The Spirit enables us to love God and others with *God’s own love*

 1 Corinthians 13

**Conclusion**

God wanted to express outside of Himself the eternal love that existed in the Trinity before the world began. He wanted to express His love in the greatest possible way. Any other expression of His love would have been less satisfying to Him.

We may say that God did a cost/benefit analysis—the cost to Himself and the benefit to Himself—in fashioning the plan of redemption as He did.

**God’s Plan to Express His Love**

