

This is the marvelous love that the hymnwriter attempted to express in these words:

It was love that sent the Savior to this world of sin and woe;
 It was love that left heav'n's portals and came down to dwell below;
 It was love that stilled the waters on the stormy Galilee;
 It was love that paid sin's ransom one dark day on Calvary.
 Love so divine! Love so sublime!
 Love that is deeper than any sea;
 Love for us all, O how can it be?

But if grace is extended to sinners on the basis of Christ's atonement, and if Christ's atonement was prompted by love, what called forth that love? Why should God love sinners who have rejected His Word and rebelled against His Law? Why should He love those who have rejected Him?

In Deuteronomy 7:6-7 Moses is reviewing for the Israelites the Law of God and their relationship to the Lawgiver. He says:

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Why did the Lord set His love on Israel and choose them? Because He loved them! And why did He love them? Was it because of something special He saw in them: some righteous tendency, some special characteristic, some special potential? NO! He simply loved them because He loved them!

If someone were to object, "But that's not a reason; that's a repetition!" he would be correct, with one minor modification. The Bible does not give a reason why God loved them, but this does not mean that there was no reason. One thing is clear: whatever reason God had for loving them, it was not because of something good or meritorious in them. God's love was unmerited, unearned, and undeserved – and that is grace!

And so it is in the case of God's special grace toward some suffering sinners.

God's special grace toward some human beings takes two basic forms: God's special mercy and God's special love.

1. How God's special mercy prevents or alleviates some suffering for some human beings
 - a. One important way in which God in His special mercy prevents or alleviates some suffering for some human beings is by choosing them for salvation, even though they deserve condemnation.