

**God's Will That All Be Saved:
The Character of God as Revealed in the Incarnate Word in the Theology of John Wesley**

1. Introduction

Wesley's understanding of predestination was based on his understanding of the character of God and in particular the work of Christ. From his Christology, and from God's character as revealed in Jesus Christ, Wesley concludes that the extent of the atonement is not limited in scope, but rather unlimited. Christ's death was sufficient to atone for the sins of every person who ever lived, but is applied effectively only to those who appropriate its effects by faith in Christ. This paper will give a survey of Wesley's understanding of the atonement, and show that God's nature and will are revealed through the Cross.

2. Wesley's View of the Deity of Christ

In order to understand Wesley's view of the nature of God as revealed in the Incarnate Word, it must be shown that Wesley viewed Jesus as God. If this can be shown, then the nature and work of Christ is a revelation of the nature of God.

Wesley in his writings frequently affirms Christ's divinity as defined in both the Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed. In his sermon, "Spiritual Worship" (1780), he details his belief in Christ's divinity. He states that Jesus is God as follows,

And first we may inquire, how is he the true God? He is 'God over all, blessed for ever'. 'He was with God', with God the Father, 'from the beginning', from eternity, 'and was God.' 'He and the Father are one;' and consequently he 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God'. Accordingly the inspired writers give him all the titles of the most high God. They call him over and over by the incommunicable name, Jehovah, never given to any creature. They ascribe to him all the attributes and all the works of God. So that we need not scruple to pronounce him God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God: in glory equal with the Father, in majesty coeternal.¹

¹ John Wesley, Sermon 77, "Spiritual Worship," *The Works of John Wesley* (Bicentennial Ed.) (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984-), 3:90-91. Italics in original. The Bicentennial Edition of Wesley's Works will be abbreviated as *Works* [BE].

Wesley confirms his understanding of Jesus as defined in the Nicene Creed. He defines Christ using a word-for-word rendering of the Nicene Creed, stating that Jesus is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God”. In addition, Wesley elucidates his understanding of Jesus as defined in the Athanasian Creed. This time, he paraphrases the creed and states, “In glory equal with the Father, in majesty co-eternal”.

In accordance with the Creeds, Wesley asserts that Jesus shares the divine substance, sharing the glory and majesty with God the Father. He implicitly demonstrates, through citing the Athanasian Creed, his acceptance of the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are equal in glory and are co-eternal. Wesley avows that Jesus was “with God the Father...from eternity”. Consequently, the name Jehovah, which was used of God in the Old Testament, may correctly be ascribed to Jesus.

The divinity of Christ is further confirmed in Wesley’s sermon, “The End of Christ’s Coming” (1781), wherein he states:

He was manifested as the only-begotten Son of God, in glory equal with the Father, to the inhabitants of heaven, before and at the foundation of the world. These ‘morning-stars sang together’, all these ‘sons of God shouted for joy’, when they heard him pronounce, ‘Let there be light; and there was light;’ when he ‘spread the north over the empty space’, and ‘stretched out the heavens as a curtain’. Indeed it was the universal belief of the ancient Church that God the Father none hath seen, nor can see; that from all eternity he hath dwelt in light unapproachable; and it is only in and by the Son of his love that he hath at any time revealed himself to his creatures.²

Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God, co-equal with the Father. He existed before the world was created, and was present when it was created. Jesus was the one who said, as recorded in Genesis 1, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Thus Jesus Christ is the creator, co-equal with God the Father.

Wesley writes somewhat similarly in his sermon, “Spiritual Worship” (1780):

² Sermon 62, “The End of Christ’s Coming,” *Works* [BE], 2:478.

He is the ‘true God’, the only Cause, the sole Creator of all things. ‘By him’, saith the Apostle Paul, ‘were created all things that are in heaven, and that are on earth’, – yea, earth and heaven themselves; but the inhabitants are named, because more noble than the house – ‘visible and invisible’. The several species of which are subjoined: ‘Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.’ So St. John, ‘All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.’ And accordingly St. Paul applies to him those strong words of the Psalmist, ‘Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.’³

Jesus Christ is Creator, jointly with the Father and Spirit. He has created all things “visible and invisible”, as stated in the Nicene Creed. Furthermore, Jesus Christ’s creative role is affirmed in the Psalms. Christ built the earth, and the heavens are his handiwork. Wesley continues,

And as ‘the true God’ he is also the *Supporter* of all the things that he hath made. He ‘beareth’, upholdeth, sustaineth, ‘all’ created ‘things by the word of his power’, by the same powerful word which brought them out of nothing. As this was absolutely necessary for the beginning of their existence, it is equally so for the continuance of it: were his almighty influence withdrawn they could not subsist a moment longer. Hold up a stone in the air; the moment you withdraw your hand it naturally falls to the ground. In like manner, were he to withdraw his hand for a moment, the creation would fall into nothing.⁴

Jesus supports all that he has made. He created from nothing through the power of his word. As God, Christ created *ex nihilo* and spoke things into existence. Not only did Christ create, but also he sustains his creation. Christ and the power of his word were “absolutely necessary for the beginning of their [creation’s] existence”, and they are both essential “equally for the continuance of it”. Christ, then, reveals his divinity through creation. He spoke the world into existence out of nothing, and he maintains it by the power of his word.

3. Wesley’s View of the Sinlessness of Christ

Wesley believed that humans were infected by original sin. In order for Christ to be able to atone for sins, he himself had to be sinless; or else his sacrifice would be ineffective.

Wesley’s affirmation of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is apparent in his sermon, “The Lord Our

³ Sermon 77, “Spiritual Worship,” *Works* [BE], 3:91.

⁴ *Ibid.* Italics in original.

Righteousness” (1765). Here, he defends the righteousness of Christ, in regards both to his divinity and humanity. Wesley asks, “What is the righteousness of Christ?” He answers, “It is twofold, either his divine or human righteousness.” He then endeavours to describe Christ’s divine righteousness as follows:

His divine righteousness belongs to his divine nature, as he is $\acute{o}\ \acute{\omega}\nu$, ‘He that existeth over all, God, blessed for ever:’ the supreme, the eternal, ‘equal with the Father as touching his godhead, though inferior to the Father as touching his manhood’. Now this is his eternal, essential, immutable holiness; his infinite justice, mercy, and truth: in all which, ‘he and the Father are one.’⁵

Wesley thus theologically grounds Christ’s sinlessness in his belief in Christ’s deity. He believes in the divine righteousness of Christ; Jesus was righteous because he was God.

In addition to Christ’s divine sinlessness, Wesley believes that Christ was sinless in his humanity. He continues in the sermon,

The *human righteousness* of Christ belongs to him in his human nature, as he is ‘the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus’. This is either *internal* or *external*. His internal righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of his soul. It is a copy of his divine righteousness, as far as it can be imparted to a human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy, and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper: and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness.⁶

Christ possesses human righteousness, in two respects – internal and external. Regarding the internal, Christ is “the image of God” and thus internal righteousness is “stamped on every power and faculty of the soul”. His internal human righteousness is “a copy of his divine righteousness”, and therefore possesses “divine purity”. Therefore, Christ is holy in all of his faculties, and he does not contain any “mixture of unholiness”. Christ was

⁵ Sermon 20, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” *Works* [BE], 1:452.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 452-53. Italics in original.

perfect in all of his thoughts, and never had one sinful thought or intention. His humanity is endowed with perfect internal sinlessness.

Regarding his external behaviour, Wesley maintains that Christ is spotless here also. He describes Christ's behaviour while living on earth as follows:

It was the least part of his *external righteousness* that he did nothing amiss; that he knew no outward sin of any kind, 'neither was guile found in his mouth'; that he never spoke one improper word, nor did one improper action. Thus far it is only a *negative* righteousness, though such an one as never did nor ever can belong to anyone that is born of a woman, save himself alone. But even his outward righteousness was *positive* too. 'He did all things well.' In every word of his tongue, in every work of his hands, he did precisely the 'will of him that sent him'. In the whole course of his life he did the will of God on earth as the angels do it in heaven. All he acted and spoke was exactly right in every circumstance. The whole and every part of his obedience was complete. 'He fulfilled all righteousness.'⁷

Christ's human righteousness is thus both internal and external. While on earth, Jesus did not commit any sins whatsoever. "He never spoke one improper word, nor did one improper action." He did not commit any transgressions in words or deeds. Wesley called this "negative righteousness" because of things that Jesus did not do in order to maintain his righteousness.

However, Wesley also referred to the "positive righteousness" of Christ's outward actions. He believes that Jesus "did all things well". Every word spoken by Christ, and every action committed by him was sinless. Every thing that Jesus "acted and spoke was exactly right in every circumstance". Furthermore, every thing that Jesus did or spoke was in accordance with the will of God the Father. Jesus did "the will of Him that sent him", and thereby "did the will of God on earth". Jesus' "positive righteousness" was all that he spoke or said to maintain his righteousness. In so doing, Jesus "fulfilled all

⁷ Ibid., 453. Italics in original.

righteousness” because he not only abstained from sinful words or actions, but more importantly performed the will of God the Father perfectly on earth.

For Wesley, it is precisely Christ’s righteousness, both divine and human, which qualifies him to be an atonement for sin. Concerning Christ’s obedience, Wesley states,

But his obedience implied more than all this. It implied not only doing, but suffering: suffering the whole will of God from the time he came into the world till ‘he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree;’ yea, till having made a full atonement for them ‘he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.’ This is usually termed the *passive* righteousness of Christ, the former, his *active* righteousness. But as the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never in fact separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all, either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly that Jesus is called, ‘the Lord our righteousness’.⁸

Here, the purpose of Christ’s righteousness is reached, namely the cross. For Wesley, Christ’s obedience implied his suffering. Christ’s righteousness suggests his atonement. The purpose of Christ’s sinlessness was to bear the sins of the world in order to make a full atonement for them. Jesus not only did the will of God through his speech and actions, but also performed the will of God by becoming a sacrifice for sin. Christ’s obedience is the basis of his suffering on the cross.

Notice also that Wesley advocates Jesus as the “Lord Our Righteousness”. As such, he does not put a bifurcation between the divine and human righteousness of Christ. Nor does he see a division between the internal and external righteousness of Jesus. For Wesley, “the Lord our Righteousness” encapsulates Christ’s divine righteousness, his human internal righteousness, his human external negative righteousness, and his human external positive righteousness; it was all one and the same. Wesley maintains that Jesus was righteous and sinless. For him, referring to Jesus as sinless implies his atonement for sin on the cross.

⁸ Ibid. Italics in original.

4. Unlimited Atonement in Hymns Edited by John Wesley

For Wesley, good hymns contained spiritual truths found in the Bible.⁹ Although it was Charles who penned most of the hymns in the Methodist Collection, it was John who endorsed publishing them, Franz Hildebrandt notes.¹⁰ He observes, “the prime source of [John] Wesley’s theology lies here.”¹¹ Wesley edited and compiled Charles’ work, and was therefore “very much a part of Wesley’s educational and evangelical ministry,” states Oliver Beckerlegge.¹² Allan Coppedge concurs that the hymns reveal Wesley’s theology, stating “an examination of Wesley’s preaching...along with his hymns and early publications on predestination, has already demonstrated his strong commitment to the doctrine of universal redemption.”¹³ This section will detail and analyze a selection of the hymns contained in Wesley’s *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists*, thereby understanding his theology regarding God’s nature revealed in the atonement.

The first hymn in the hymnal, “O For a thousand tongues to sing”, is a favourite hymn of Methodism. Some relevant verses are as follows:

¹ O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise!
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

⁴ He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean—
His blood availed for me.

⁶ Look unto him, ye nations, own
Your God, ye fallen race;

⁹ John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of The People Called Methodists*, Works [BE], 7:74. Hereafter cited as *Collection*.

¹⁰ Franz Hildebrandt, Introduction, ‘A Little Body of Experimental and Practical Divinity’, *Collection*, Works [BE], 7:2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹² Oliver Beckerlegge, Introduction, ‘Literary Characteristics of the Hymns’, *Collection*, Works [BE], 7:55.

¹³ Allan Coppedge, *John Wesley in Theological Debate* (Wilmore, Kentucky: Wesley Heritage Press, 1987), 134.

Look, and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace!

⁷ See all your sins on Jesus laid:
The Lamb of God was slain,
His soul was once an offering made
For every soul of man.¹⁴

The atonement of Christ is available for all since it can “make the foulest clean”. Justification is available for the entire fallen human race, regardless of national or ethnic identity. Verse seven explicitly supports unlimited atonement; the sins of the entire world were laid on Jesus, and he was the sacrificial offering for every human. Similarly, the third hymn states:

²If any man thirst, And happy would be,
The vilest and worst May come unto me;
May drink of my Spirit (Excepted is none),
Lay claim to my merit, And take for his own.

³Whoever receives The life-giving word,
In Jesus believes, His God and his Lord,
In him a pure river Of life shall arise,
Shall in the believer Spring up to the skies.¹⁵

Again, anyone is able to come and drink of Christ’s Spirit. The key phrase employed in this hymn is “excepted is none.” No human is barred from experiencing this great joy, despite living despicable and wicked lives. Any person can “lay claim” to the merits of Christ’s work on the cross by appropriating it through faith. Thus, “whoever receives” Jesus by faith, and trusts in him for salvation can benefit from Christ’s unlimited atonement on the cross.

Christ’s dying for all is also evidenced in hymn 80, which states:

⁴ Thy people, Lord, are sold for nought,
Nor know they their Redeemer nigh;
They perish, whom thyself hast bought,
Their souls for lack of knowledge die.

⁵ The pit its mouth hath opened wide

¹⁴ *Collection, Hymn 1, Works [BE], 7:79-81.*

¹⁵ *Collection, Hymn 3, Works [BE], 7:83.*

To swallow up its careless prey.
Why should they die, when thou hast died,
Hast died to bear their sins away?

⁶ Why should the foe thy purchase seize?
Remember, Lord, thy dying groans.
The meed of all thy sufferings these;
O claim them for thy ransomed ones!¹⁶

Wesley's editing demonstrates two things: firstly, Christ has procured salvation for all, and has provided redemption for every soul, and secondly, his sacrifice bore the sins of all. However, people may still die if they do not know that Jesus has died for them, and fail to place their trust in him for salvation. The last verse of this hymn ends, "And grant their hearts thy word to hear, And witness all their sins forgiven."¹⁷ Those who accept Christ are the "meed" or reward of his suffering. True believers are the "ransomed ones" who lay claim to the benefits of Christ's suffering. Hence, Jesus procured salvation for all through his atonement, but failure to know him intimately and personally makes the atonement, although unlimited in scope, of no effect. Unlimited atonement is described in procurement language. Christ has "bought" the pardon for those who do not know him as Saviour. He has purchased salvation for every individual.

Procurement language, however is not always employed when referring to unlimited atonement. Words concerning blood and atonement are consistently used. Furthermore, unlimited atonement cannot be mistaken for universalism. The benefits of the atonement are only for those who believe. One hymn articulates,

⁵ Who in heart on thee believes,
He th' atonement now receives,
He with joy beholds thy face,
Triumphs in thy pard'ning grace.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Collection*, Hymn 80, *Works* [BE], 7:179-80.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁸ *Collection*, Hymn 340, *Works* [BE], 7:501.

Wesley maintains that the benefits of Christ's atonement are applied only through faith. Hymn 83 expresses this:

¹ Spirit of faith, come down,
Reveal the things of God,
And make to us the Godhead known,
And witness with the blood:
'Tis thine the blood to apply,
And give us eyes to see,
Who did for every sinner die
Hath surely died for me.

² No man can truly say
That Jesus is the Lord
Unless thou take the veil away,
And breathe the living word;
Then, only then we feel
Our interest in his blood,
And cry with joy unspeakable,
Thou art my Lord, my God!

³ O that the world might know
The all-atoning Lamb!
Spirit of faith, descend, and show
The virtue of his name;
The grace which all may find,
The saving power impart,
And testify to all mankind,
And speak in every heart!

⁴ Inspire the living faith
(Which whosoe'er receives,
The witness in himself he hath,
And consciously believes),
The faith that conquers all,
And doth the mountain move,
And saves whoe'er on Jesus call,
And perfects them in love.¹⁹

Trinitarian theology is confirmed through this hymn. The Holy Spirit reveals God the Father and God the Son, thereby making the Godhead known. The Spirit reveals Christ and his salvific work on the cross. This hymn clearly outlines Wesley's theology concerning Christ's atoning

¹⁹ *Collection*, Hymn 83, *Works* [BE], 7:182-3. Brackets in original.

work, and to whom its benefits are applied. Christ has died “for every sinner”, and is therefore correctly referred to as “the all-atoning Lamb.” People cannot come to Christ for salvation unless the Holy Spirit, referred to as the “Spirit of faith”, opens their spiritual eyes and illuminates them, pointing them to Jesus. When people come to saving faith in Christ, thereby testifying that “Jesus is Lord, the “interest” of Christ’s blood, namely the merits of the atonement, are applied to them and they are saved. Whoever “believes” in Jesus through the illumination of the Spirit is the one who “receives” the benefits of Christ’s atonement on the cross.

5. God’s Character as Love Underpinning the Unlimited Atonement Found in Hymns Edited by John Wesley

For Wesley, God’s nature as love is demonstrated through the unlimited atonement. This is found in the hymns that he included as part of his Collection. Hymn 125 reveals that Jesus can save all because redeeming love is found through him. The lyrics are as follows:

¹ Adam, descended from above,
Federal Head of all mankind,
The covenant of redeeming love
In thee let every sinner find.

² Its Surety, thou alone hast paid
The debt we to thy Father owed,
For the whole world atonement made,
And sealed the pardon with thy blood.

³ Thee, the paternal grace divine
An universal blessing gave:
A light in every heart to shine,
A Saviour every soul to save.

⁴ Light of the Gentile world, appear!
Command the blind thy rays to see,
Our darkness chase, our sorrows cheer,
And set thy plaintive prisoners free.

⁵ Me, me, who still in darkness sit,

Shut up in sin and unbelief,
Bring forth out of this hellish pit,
This dungeon of despairing grief.

⁶ Open mine eyes the Lamb to know
Who bears the general sin away!
And to my ransomed spirit show
The glories of eternal day.²⁰

Jesus died to atone for the sins of every human being since he has borne “the general sin away.” He is the Saviour who is willing to save every soul with “an universal blessing.” Furthermore, he is God since he has “descended from above.” In him, all are to find “the covenant of redeeming love”. Hence, Jesus is not just the redeemer, but he is also love. God’s love is the underpinning of his atonement for all, and his redemption of all. Unlimited atonement and universal redemption reveal God’s nature as love.

God’s nature as love is further confirmed in hymn 128:

⁶ What shall I say thy grace to move?
Lord, I am sin — but *thou art love*.
I give up every plea beside,
‘Lord, I am damned — but thou hast died.’²¹

Wesley maintains that Jesus is love. Humans are nothing but sin, while Jesus is love by his very nature and being. It is the Lord’s nature as love that moves him to save all of humanity.

Therefore, the sacrifice on the cross was not devoid of love. Contrarily, it was a perfect display of God’s love, and it demonstrated the magnitude of his love to humanity. The hymn 367 describes the vastness of God’s love:

² I long to know, and to make known
The heights and depths of love divine!
The kindness thou to me hast shown,
Whose every sin was counted thine!
My God for me resigned his breath!
He died to save my soul from death!²²

²⁰ *Collection*, Hymn 125, *Works* [BE], 7:236-7.

²¹ *Collection*, Hymn 128, *Works* [BE], 7:239. Italics added.

The divine love of God in taking upon the sins of humanity is enormous; it cannot be reckoned by “height and depth”. God’s love cannot be measured because God is love himself. This “divine love” is not simply an attribute of God, but rather love is his essence. God is love in and of himself. Another popular hymn puts it as such:

¹ Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation!
Enter every trembling heart.

² Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.²³

Jesus is the Divine Love, who came to earth from heaven. He is “unbounded love” and “all compassion”. Love is the essence of Jesus, thereby explaining why he brings salvation to all humankind. Since love is his essence, Jesus possesses “perfect love”, through which he is “almighty to deliver.” Christ, as love, sacrificed himself on the cross to redeem all of humanity and to atone for all their sins.

Jesus as the embodiment of love is critical in Wesley’s theology. Christ, as love, is revealed through universal redemption and unlimited atonement. Jesus is love, and is put to pen as follows:

¹ Arise, my soul, arise,

²² *Collection*, Hymn 367, *Works* [BE], 7:537.

²³ *Collection*, Hymn 374, *Works* [BE], 7:545-6.

Thy Saviour's sacrifice!
All the names that love could find,
All the forms that love could take,
Jesus in himself hath joined,
Thee, my soul, his own to make.²⁴

“All forms of love” are united together in Jesus. He possesses every kind of love, since he is love itself. It is this love that is manifested in Christ’s sacrifice, whereby humanity becomes children of God. God’s nature as love is what compelled Christ to the cross in order to make humanity his own, albeit through saving faith. The love of God, who is love in himself, obliged him to become a sacrifice for all humanity.

The theme of extraordinary, divine love is further evidenced in a well-known hymn of Methodism. The beloved hymn “And can it be” explicates this love:

¹ And can it be, that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me? Who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

² 'Tis myst'ry all: th'Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore!
Let angel minds inquire no more.

³ He left his Father's throne above,
(So free, so infinite his grace!),
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!²⁵

God’s death for humanity demonstrates the magnitude of his “amazing love.” Christ, as love, sacrificed his life for all of humanity, and therefore “for me.” Interestingly, Christ “emptied

²⁴ *Collection*, Hymn 187, *Works* [BE], 7:315.

²⁵ *Collection*, Hymn 193, *Works* [BE], 7:322-3. Brackets in original.

himself of all but love.” While hanging on the cross, Christ remained love; it did not diminish in the slightest. When the Son became sin for all of humanity on the cross, the wrath and judgment of God the Father was poured out upon God the Son at the cross. Although Christ remained sinless ontologically, Christ’s becoming humanity’s sin meant that sin was imputed to him. However, Christ’s love did not diminish because he is love. Lest Wesley be charged with heresy, he maintained that Christ was both perfect God and perfect Man, meaning that he was sinless in both his humanity and divinity. Nonetheless, at the moment when he was on the cross, Christ became sin for all of humanity, and thereby emptied himself of sinlessness imputationally, not essentially. While on the cross, however, he maintained his love for all since he himself is love.

6. Conclusion

God’s reigning attribute is redeeming love. God’s love is evidenced in the Father sending the Son, and the Son sacrificing himself on the cross through the power of the Holy Spirit, thereby atoning for the sins of all. God’s character, especially of redeeming love, is the theological underpinning of Wesley’s doctrine of predestination. As scribed in one of the hymns in the Collection,

² He ever lives above
For me to intercede;
His all-redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead:
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.²⁶

Christ, who is love, atoned for all the sins of humanity. God’s character as love is revealed most profoundly and clearly in his sacrifice on the cross for all of humanity.

²⁶*Collection*, Hymn 194, *Works* [BE], 7:324.

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