



G. E. Fifield on Love and Justice

Thanks to Raymond van den Hoven for providing Hs.com with this beautiful sermon on the character of God given by G. E. Fifield at the 1897 Seventh-day Adventist General Conference. It can be found in the Adventists Pioneer Library, as sermon 1 of the 1897 GCB:

Sermon. - No. 1. G. E. FIFIELD. (Tuesday Evening, Feb. 9, 1897.)

You will find the basis of our study this evening in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the third verse: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." In connection with this I will read several other verses of the same chapter, and also a translation, which will enable us to obtain the thought more clearly:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The other translation reads: "Surely he bore our griefs, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was pierced through by our sins; he was crushed by our misdeeds. The chastisement of our peace lay upon him, and in his wounds there became healing for us. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Another translation: "The Lord let all our misdeeds come upon him." Verse eight: "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was he stricken." The other translation: "From distress and judgment was he taken; and in his generation who thought that he should be plucked out of the land of the living for the misdeeds of my people, punishment to them." Tenth verse: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Translation: "It pleased the Lord to let him be crushed; he hath made him sick; when his soul hath given a trespass offering, he shall see seed and live long." The thought is clearly enough expressed in the Authorized Version, but since we are liable sometimes to receive the wrong thought, the translation helps us to see it more clearly.

The third verse states and vividly contrasts the true and the false idea of Christ's mission, and of his work, and of the atonement. One is what was, and the other is what we thought was; one is truth, the other is falsehood; one is Christianity, the other is paganism. We would do well to study every thought in that text. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was pierced through by our misdeeds, and God permitted it because in his stripes there was healing for us. But we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Whose griefs? Whose sorrows? - Ours. The grief and the sorrow that crushed the heart of Christ, and took him from among the living, so that he died of a broken heart, was no strange, new grief or sorrow. It was not something unlike what we have to bear; it was not God arbitrarily putting upon him our sins, and thus punishing our sins in him to deliver us. He took no position arbitrarily that we do not have to suffer. It was our griefs and our sorrows that pierced him through. He took our sinful natures, and our sinful flesh, at the point of weakness to which we had brought it, submitting himself to all the conditions of the race, and placing himself where we are to fight the conflict that we have to fight, the fight of faith. And he did this by the same power to which we have access. By the Spirit of God he cast out devils; through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot; and the Spirit of God rested upon him, and made him of quick understanding in the things of God. It was our sins that he took; our temptations.

It is my experience that in nine cases out of ten, when men consider those temptations in the fourth chapter of Matthew, which are typical of all his temptations, they fail to recognize their likeness to our own. They make him tempted in all points like as we are not, rather than like as we are. Picture to yourselves the wonderful experience that Christ had at his baptism, when he entered upon his mission, when the Spirit of God descended upon him with power, and the voice was heard, saying, "This is my

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It would seem that after such an experience as that, it would surely be all smooth sailing. But out there in the wilderness, when the Saviour was in apparent weakness and hunger, the devil pressed him, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Have we not had this experience? How many of us can look back to the time when we were baptized, when we heard God saying to us, This is my beloved son, this is my beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased; and we thought we would have smooth sailing, but soon found ourselves out in some wilderness of temptation, conscious of our weakness, and the devil came along and said, You are a pretty servant of God.

Again the devil took him up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth, and said: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The circumstances were such as to make it plain that the design of the devil was to lead him to bow down and support a god of force, instead of making him the king of the world. He would have him be untrue to his mission. And so he would have us, by some false method, to think that we may make a great many more dollars, and to see how much of the world we can get. When he failed with Christ on these two points, he pressed him farther to get him to presume upon the mercy of God. Just so he would tempt us to presume upon the mercy of God.

He took our sorrows, our griefs, all the conflicts of our lives upon him, and was tempted in all points as we are. He took the injustices of our lives upon him too. It is a fact that you and I have to suffer for many things for which we are not at fault. All my suffering is not the result of my sin. Some of it is; but just as long as sin exists, injustice exists. As long as men sin, men will be sinned against. Just so you and I will have to suffer for the sins of others; and so God, to show that he knew and realized all that, let him that was perfectly innocent, take the injustice and sin of us all. O brethren and sisters, he did not bear some other grief or some other sorrow, but he bore our griefs and our sorrows. He was pierced through by them, and the Lord permitted it, because there was healing in it for us; not that he might appease God, or reconcile him unto us. Every passage of Scripture that refers to the reconciliation or atonement, or to the propitiation, always represents God as the one who makes this atonement, reconciliation, or propitiation, in Christ; we are always the ones atoned for, the ones to be reconciled. For us it was done, in order that, as Peter says, he might bring us to God.

The only way to do this is by destroying sin in us. He took our sins upon him in order that he might bring us to God. It was that he might break down the high middle wall of partition between human hearts and God, between Jew and Gentile, between God and man; that he might make us one with him, and one with one another, thus making the at-one-ment, or the atonement. In Christ Jesus we who were sometimes afar off were made nigh by the blood of Christ, so that we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." This is as near to the Lord as we can get. This is the at-one-ment; this is why he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, that he might do that for us by breaking down all those things which separate hearts from hearts, both human and divine. Notwithstanding this, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That was what we thought about it. We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice. The Christian idea of sacrifice is this. Let us note the contrast. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That is the Christian idea. Yes, sir. Indifference keeps, hatred keeps, selfishness keeps, or gives, if at all, but grudgingly, counting the cost, and figuring on some larger return at some future time. But love, and love only, sacrifices, gives freely, gives itself, gives without counting the cost; gives because it is love. That is sacrifice, whether it is the sacrifice of bulls and goats, or of him who is the Lamb of God. It is the sacrifice that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. But the pagan idea of sacrifice is just the opposite. It is that some god is always offended, always angry, and his wrath must be propitiated in some way.

If it is an ordinary case, the blood of bulls and goats will suffice; but if it is an extraordinary case, the blood of some innocent virgin or child must flow; and when the god smells the blood, his wrath is appeased. We talk of pagan immortality, pagan Sunday, pagan idolatry, etc.; but it seems to me that the lowest thought is that men have brought this pagan idea of sacrifice right into the Bible, and applied it to the sacrifice of the cross. So the Methodist Discipline uses these words: "Christ died to reconcile the Father unto us;" that is, to propitiate God so that we could be forgiven - paganism straight out. Why, brethren and sisters, it is the application of the pagan conception of sacrifice to the sacrifice upon the cross, so that that wonderful manifestation of divine love, which God intended should cause all men, all beings in the universe, to wonder and adore, has been turned around and made a manifestation of wrath to be propitiated in order to save man. I am glad that we are losing sight of this manner of viewing the subject, where we do not say that Christ died to reconcile the Father unto us. Brethren, there is sometimes such a thing as to give up the expression of a thing, and think we have thus gotten rid of it, when a good deal of it still lingers and clouds our consciousness of the love of God, and the beauty of his truth, so that we cannot present a clear gospel to hungry souls that are waiting to know about God. I pray that God will let the sunlight of his truth shine into my heart, and into all of our hearts. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows that he might bring us to him; but we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That is what we thought; that is what we esteemed; not what was, but what we thought was. Now, every text in the Bible that speaks of reconciliation, makes God the one who makes the reconciliation, - God in Christ. Every text in the Bible that speaks of the atonement, when we get it right, makes God the one who makes the atonement in Christ; not Christ simply, but God in Christ; just as God in Christ creates, redeems, reconciles, he makes the atonement. And every time the atonement, reconciliation, or propitiation are mentioned, it leads us right back to the character of God. So I want to begin right here, and study God a little, and study him as the All Truth. He is the All Truth. He is love. "God is love." Let us analyze that just a little, and see what it means.

Does it mean that God is love, and part something else? - No. The Bible says that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is truth. Christ says, "I am the truth"; and again, "I and my Father are one;" so God is truth. He is the All Truth of the universe made living and personal, and touched with tender, throbbing love. That is God, and that is Christ too. Yes, he is the light, and in him is no darkness at all. He is all love and no hatred. Very well.

SOME one says, I know, I know; God is love, but he is love and justice. Now the minute a man says that, and means what he says, there is nothing more unjust in this universe than his idea of justice. Let us think of that for a moment. Is there justice outside of love. Suppose I love A and B. But I love A more than B. Is it my lack of love to B that prompts my love for A? - No, it is not. Now is there such a thing as loving a man with an impartial love. Can I be unjust to anybody? God is just, because he is love.

We talk about the mercy of God. What is mercy? - Disposition to treat an offender better than he deserves. We talk about his grace. Grace is unmerited favor. That is the way God does. Shows unmerited favor. All these are moral attributes of love.

How does righteousness come? Righteousness, which is the fulfilling of the law, is simply acting out the acts of love. How am I going to act out the acts of love? Try real hard to love somebody? It does not come that way. Did you ever try it? No, sir; you cannot make it that way. But if somebody acts loveable, you love him. And so the reason God can love everything, and thus act out the acts of love, is because God is love. He has manifested himself to beget his love in us, and that love flows out in righteousness. Then the power of God is the power of love. If I had time I would carry that beyond moral power; it is even the power that upholds the universe. It is all.

And now a moment on the omniscience of God. I want to show you that if God should cease to be all-loving, he would cease to be all-knowing. Can hatred, envy, and jealousy know and comprehend love? The infinite Love was once in this world, in human form; and what did they do to him? - They crucified him. What did they crucify him for? - Because they knew him not. Hatred, envy, and jealousy can look infinite Love in the face, and not know it. Only love can comprehend love. Love can also see hatred, envy, and jealousy in their true light, because love seeth, knoweth, and comprehendeth all things. And that is why God can be omniscient, because he is love. It is one of the attributes of love. But some one

says that God is love and, and -. God is love, and he is not anything but love. All the attributes of God are the attributes of love.

And then there is the wrath of God that you read about all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. I want to turn and read a text on this point. We can only understand these things that are brought to view in the Bible, when we see them in the light and the grace of the revelation of God. The scripture I will read is found in 2Cor.3:12-16: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." God had many things to show to them that they could not bear; and as they could not see the true glory as it was, he had to vail it, so they could take it. "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." And, brethren, if we want to understand what God has said all through this Book, we want to turn to him, and we will understand all. Was there ever a being in this world that hated sin as Christ hates it? - No. Was there ever a being who loved the sinner as Christ loved him? - No. Suppose I hate a man, and somebody is trying to do that man an injury, and I see it, and do not try to prevent it. Do I care whether that man is injured or not? - No; I am rather glad of it. But suppose I love that man, and here is a man that is trying to thrust a dagger into him and kill him. Now the measure of my hatred for that deed is the measure of my love for that man. I am liable to hate the man that is doing the deed, too. But I hate the deed, anyway. Now, brethren, the measure of God's hatred for sin, is the measure of his love for the sinner.

Sin has been lurking with murderous intent to take the life of every soul. God's wrath is kindled against the sin. Is that wrath going to be appeased in any way? O if it were, it would be a bad thing for us. That wrath of God against sin is to burn on until it consumes every bit of sin in this universe. Just as long as God loves the sinner, he will hate the sin, and his wrath against the sin will burn; and, thank God! that wrath against sin is going to burn, unchanged, until the universe is clean.

But look: the plan of redemption is God's effort to separate the sin from the sinner, so that he can destroy the sin, and save the sinner alive forevermore. And only when the sinner inseparably connects himself with sin, does he have to take the wrath of God. And does the Lord take delight in that? - No. When you and I have wrath, we have wrath against the man. But how about God? "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," but rather that he turn and repent. Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die. The wrath of God is not against the wicked, even in their extermination; but because the wicked have inseparably connected themselves with sin, they have to break it; and the Lord says he does not take any pleasure in that.

You remember that when Christ pronounced the doom of Jerusalem, he was not angry with them, but said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" O if thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thy eyes. And that is the way God feels, even when he pronounces the doom of the sinner; not a bit different from what he feels the rest of the time - infinite love and only love, from eternity to eternity.

Every one of the attributes of God are the attributes of love. And so we want to stop saying, God is love and something else. He is love, and love contains everything that he is.

Now this God of love, whose wrath burns only against the sin, and not against the sinner - this God of love gave a law for mankind. I have but a moment to spend on that. That law was not a dead law; it was not an arbitrary law. It was not a law saying, You do so, and I will let you live; You do so, and I will kill you. But God in infinite wisdom foreknew every principle of life and light and joy; and in infinite wisdom he foretold what he foreknew. This way, my child, is life and joy. Don't you go that way, my child; that way is death. Every bit of that law is simply the life of God, which is the love of God. It had the creative power of God in it. It was not something outside of man that man must do in order to live, but it was something that God wanted to put in him and leave in him; so many divine promises, if you please. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." When we have him, we do not want any other. That is a promise.

Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill. These are loving, divine, creative promises, which God intended to put in us, to carry us to the utmost heights of joy and peace, and keep us in that path forevermore. Now man transgressed that law, and thus cut himself off from the life of God, and hopelessly committed himself to the downward tendency to evil and death. The very first act of sin put him into the Niagara current of evil, which rushed down toward the cataract; and as he went on, he did not have the desire to get out. His thoughts were downward; and a man in that position is just as much dead as if he went right over the falls - he is gone. And that is where sin put man; and sin is cumulative in its action upon the race. We saw that all righteousness is love acting out the acts of love; so love is the basis, the source, of all righteousness. But just as love is the source of all righteousness, so hatred is the source of all iniquity. Suppose I tell my boy not to do a certain thing, and he disobeys my command, and no harm comes to him. That proves that my law is an arbitrary one. But suppose he disobeys my command, and does get hurt; that proves that my law was not arbitrary at all.

From sin came misery; from misery came misunderstanding of God; from misunderstanding of God, more hatred of God, and still more sin, and still more misery and more misunderstanding. And so it went on and on, the environment and heredity increasing toward evil, and the whole world going hopelessly on, spinning down into the abyss of sin, hated and hating one another. And so it has been thought that God's sense of justice and his sense of wrath should be appeased, so that we could have justice; the thing that was needed was that God should so manifest himself, his love, as to win us to love, that we might act out the acts of love. That is the thing that was needed, not that we should so appease his wrath in some way that we dare come to him, but that he should manifest his love so that we would come to him.

Suppose here is a man that does a wrong thing to me; he hates me, and he lies about me, and he injures me, and misrepresents me. What shall I do? Shall I say, When you satisfy my sense of justice, and make that thing right, so that I think the thing is all right, then I will pardon you? I am not godlike when I do that. If I am godlike, what will I do? What does the Bible say? - "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." When that man wrongs me that way, if I am spiritual, if I am like God, who is a spirit and the father of spirits, how will I feel about it? - I will feel that the mere fact of his injuring me is such a small thing, and the fact that he has injured himself and will go down to death is such a big thing, that the first will sink out of sight; and I will go to that man, in love, not seeking to set him right toward me for my sake, but I will seek to restore him for his own sake.

That is what I will do if I am a Christian; and yet people teach that when we sin against God, and misrepresent God, he sits back and says, When I get my full satisfaction, I will grow propitious to you. O, instead of that, God gave his Son, in love, to bring us to repentance, so that he could pardon us. And just simply to restore us, and propitiate us who had become fallen in sin, and misunderstood him, and bring us back to him, and to reconcile us to him, he gave his own life, in his Son, - just that he might do that thing for us. That is the kind of God he is.

O, but you say, Christ paid the debt, and set us free. That is true, and every one of those texts in the Bible is true. When God tells us how he forgives sin, what does he say? Well, a certain man owed another man five hundred pence, and when he had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave him. That is the way God forgives sin. Christ is the price of our pardon; that is true. But let me state it: Jesus Christ is not the price paid to the Father for our pardon; but he is the price which the Father paid to bring us to a repentant attitude of mind, so that he could pardon us freely. O, that is God, brethren. That is the Father that I love so much. I have not words to tell you how I love him. That is how God forgives sin - passes by the iniquity of his people. Christ was the free gift of God, to bring us to the place where he could pardon us freely.

But some one said to me the other day, Did not Christ have to die to make the Word of God sure? because God said, If ye sin, ye shall die. In the first place, what did God mean when he said, If you sin, you will die? Did that include spiritual, physical, and eternal death? Did Christ die the spiritual or the eternal death? - No. Then is not that whole thing a fraud? And every time the Bible speaks of the debt, it is God that paid the debt in Christ, to propitiate us, to reconcile us. But still, you say, it had to be done before God could pardon. Yes, that is true; and I want to show you why; and then to-morrow night we will

continue the subject by studying the sacrifice of Christ, and seeing that it is a larger thing than you have probably thought it was.

Any pardon and any forgiveness that would not take away the effect of sin, but that would lead us more and more into sin, and into the misery that comes from sin, would be worth nothing. If the law of God was an arbitrary thing, that did not have any penalty attached to it, the Lord could say, I will pardon you. But when you transgress that law, it is death; and when you keep the law, it is life and joy and peace. Now read the seventh verse of the first chapter of Ephesians: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." If God had not been wise, he might have pardoned our sins in an imprudent way. Now, brethren, every father in this world knows what it is to want to let his children do things which they would enjoy doing, and he has to restrain that which would bring present pleasure, restrain that love, because of the evil effects it would have.

Was sin ever less repentant than at the foot of the cross? There you have the thing. There was God revealing himself in Christ on the cross, and there was sin unrepentant, hatred and mocking at the foot of the cross. How did God feel toward those unrepentant sinners? - "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That is how Christ felt, and that is how God felt. He did not have any grudge against them. He would like to forgive everybody. But why could he not do it? - It would annul his law, if it was an arbitrary law; but if it were not, it would lead men to go into sin, and sin and death would result. It would be God simply taking the place of the imprudent father and spoiling his child. And therefore, because he could not do that, he set forth Christ to be, not the propitiation of God's wrath, but the propitiation of our sins, that God might be just, and still the justifier of them who believe in Jesus; because he would take the sins away from them if they believed in him, and then he could set them free, and be just in doing it, for he would not lead anybody else into sin in doing it.

O, I am so glad that we have a God whose very nature and disposition is to pardon sin; that we have a Father who is not holding any grudge against us, but instead of that, is giving his own life, in his Son, that he may so manifest his love as to bring us back to him, and so give us the life power as to live his life. It was needed that his life should be revealed, and his divine life imparted, that we might live that life on earth; and that is what he did in Christ. O, I am so glad we have such a God as that, who gives his own life to win us back to him! The love of God is the one unchanging thing in a universe of change. Just as the waters of a flood might run high above the mountain tops, but they could not obscure the sun in the heavens; so the waves of sin might dash high above every human affection, but they cannot change the heart of God. O brethren, we have a God that loves sinners, and that forgives sin, and that gives his own life, in his Son, to bring us to repentance, so that he can forgive us. That is the kind of God we have. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing our iniquities unto us, and giving unto us the ministry of reconciliation.

How could God love a sinner? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." That word "world" is cosmos; it means order, harmony, beauty, arrangement. You see the world was out of harmony, out of order; but God saw underneath the world of evil, the cosmos that was, the order that was to be, and he loved the cosmos that was, and gave his life to bring out the harmony.

The Spirit of God brooding over the chaos - that love of not merely what is, but what is to be, that love of the possible - O brethren, he broods over the chaos of your life and mine. It is not simply the chaos in the great big world; but he brings out the possible in us, and restores us to his image. That is the kind of God we have.

And he has committed to us that same thing, too, so that when we become like him, we can love all men, coarse though they be on the outside. And when we have the divine life of God, which sees beneath the surface, we will see loveliness in every character, that we long to live out, and long, as God does, to bring out.

With the story which I shall now relate we will close the subject for this evening. It is the story of the wonderful legend of the Holy Grail, wrought out into verse by James Russell Lowell. It has had a wonderful lesson in it for me. Sometimes we try to love God off into space, hoping it will hit him

somehow; but I think God wants us to love every man all around us; and God wants us to have such keen eyes that we will see the Christ in every man, and love him.

You know the story runs that Launfal started to find the Holy Grail, and one June morning he rode, grandly caparisoned, in search of the Holy Grail, to enter upon his life mission. And as he rode along down there, a beggar was sitting there, asking alms; and he averted his face as he went by, and flung a coin to him. And he passed on, and traveled in many lands, and spent years in his search. But he came back to the old home, unable to find the object of his search; and riding up that same avenue toward that mansion, a beggar was sitting there as before. Launfal looked at him, and he reasoned something like this: His life is a failure; but has not mine been, too? Here I have been striving and struggling, and failed; and here is a failure, too. He somehow felt akin to that poor old beggar now. And as he put his hand in his pocket and passed out a coin, his heart went out to him with the coin; and instantly, as the legend goes, that beggar was transformed into the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for whom he had been looking.

O brethren, he is near us; he is all around us. He gave his life to bring us back to him, and he has committed unto us that same business, too, that same reconciliation. And O may he enable us to see him in human forms all around us, so that we can feel just as he does, giving our lives to bring out the image of Christ in the most defaced form there is around us.

I want to close by saying to every one, that we have a God that forgives iniquity. The only people that will be destroyed at last will be those that have their weapons in their hands. He will forgive you if you will lay down your arms. May God reveal his love to us more and more, and in us more and more, is my prayer.

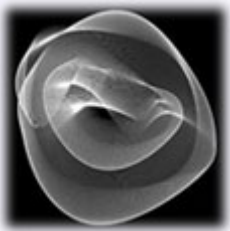
For more reading on the subject click <http://adventistarchives.org> (Click on "General Conference Session Bulletins" under the "Categories" column on left hand side of page. Then scroll down to the link "GC Session Bulletin 1897 - No. D01 ".)

Without the shedding of blood...

Here's yet another great sermon by G. E. Fifield which can be found in the Adventists Pioneer Library, as sermon #2 of the 1897 General Conference Bulletin:

You will find the text in the ninth chapter of Hebrews, and the twenty-second verse: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. This text has in it the very soul and center and secret of all true Christian consecration. The idea has obtained that God was angry with men because of sin, that God's wrath must be satisfied; and so an arrangement must be made by which he could pour out his wrath upon his Son, and thus satisfy his justice. And while this wrath was waiting for full satisfaction when it should be poured out on his Son, a system of sacrifice was instituted which would appease his wrath temporarily, and hold it in abeyance. But this idea of atonement, or reconciliation, separates entirely between the Father and the Son, making the Father so stern and hard that he demands his full "pound of flesh," so to speak, and the Son so kind, so good, that he gives it out of his own heart that we may be set free. Thus, instead of Christ revealing the Father, the two are opposite - entirely separated. But no, "He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father."

And if you want to know how God feels toward sin, notice how Christ hated sin. If you want to know how God feels toward the sinner, notice how Christ loved the sinner. God's wrath burns eternally against sin, and never will be appeased; but it will consume the sinner in the end. His love is unending, unchanging, for the sinner. And just as we have learned that the moral law is not an arbitrary thing, but a statement of everlasting love and life, so, my brethren, may we learn that, although the ceremonies have passed away by limitation, yet the meaning of those ceremonies is just as true to-day as then. And it still is true that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission."



What is the blood? Gen.9:4: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." What is the blood? - The life. Another text. Lev.7:26: "Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings." Again in Deut.12:23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood; for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh." This is the Lord interpreting the law. Lev.17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood."

The life is the blood. This is the Bible interpretation; and we will let it interpret itself. Then when we read that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," it does not mean that by some magic-charm process or incantation, it enables him to count us as cleansed. The whole living gospel was brought forth there in the sanctuary as clearly as it is here in the New Testament, and it is just as clearly applied to human lives and human hearts; but the devil stole it away.

In this dispensation, the living gospel is revealed to us in the incarnate One, Jesus of Nazareth; and yet man loses the gospel out of Christ by making the sign of the cross; and they say, We are safe, we have made the sign of the cross. They say that by some magic process or charm word or name by which they believe on him very hard, it will save them. They are using it precisely the same as the ark was used back there; and the Lord has let them be taken captive from time to time, to show them that the Word in that way does not have power to save. It is not any charm process, it is a living fact. God gave us his life in his Son that we might have life, and that we might have that life to live on the earth.

I am told that it is a scientific fact that if some one will allow his blood to be taken and transfused into the veins of a poor anemic person, the first thing the blood does is to purge out the poison and sickness, and then to build him up with a new life. New blood has been transfused into that person, and new life is imparted. Do you get the figure? We are saved by transfusing blood. God has opened his mighty heart, and poured out his life in Christ, for our salvation. He has given his life that we might take it and be purified by it, and live on earth by faith. And the life of his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Was it only on Calvary that God gave us his life? Was it only there that Christ was crucified? Was it only from Pilate's judgment hall that he bore the cross? Was it only on that last day of trial that he wore the crown of thorns? - Ah, no; far from that. Perhaps the text that will enable us most clearly to get this point, is in Gal.2:20:- I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

And Paul gave his life day by day; he gave his life in all those whippings, and beatings, and persecutions that he received from the Jews, and finally to Nero's executioners he completed the gift, and made the final delivery of the goods that had been the Lord's ever since he met him on the Damascus road.

Now let us get a glimpse of Christ's crucifixion. Jesus Christ was with God, equal with the Father in glory and honor; co-creator with him of countless worlds; all the ten thousand times ten thousand angels at his beck to do his bidding. One cannot take in the honor and the glory of that life that opened out into limitless distances before him. But down here on this world man had sinned, and Christ did not think of holding fast to that glory and honor as a robber holds fast to his prey; but he gave it up. That was when Christ was crucified. He let that life go, and he came down here and identified himself with human sorrow, with human trial, with human need, with human heart-ache; so that away back there, before he became incarnate at all, in all their afflictions he was afflicted, and he bore them and carried them all the days of old. He was with us much more than we think.

Abraham saw him; Joshua saw him; Moses saw him; the Israelites drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. The divine One had given up that life there, been crucified, and identified himself with human need down here, away back there; and when you come to the incarnation, which was but the revelation of this larger sacrifice, this larger fact, the crucifixion was carried so far that he who was Almighty became so weak that he said, "I can do nothing of myself." Is not that crucifixion?

And then every step of the way, having given up his power, having given up his infinite knowledge, he lived a life of faith, - the faith of Jesus, - amending every one of God's promises, until they became living facts in his life; and lived upon the written word day by day. When the tempter came to him, he put him to flight by the written word; and he said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He was living his spiritual life by faith in that word; and every step of the way it was

not my will, not my word, not my doctrine; but thy will, thy word, thy doctrine in me. Is not that crucifixion of self?

And finally on Calvary's cross, so far as his earthly life was concerned, he made the final delivery of the goods, and completed the crucifixion, just as Paul did to Nero's executioners. But do not think that is the end of the crucifixion in the larger sense. Just as the crucifixion of Christ did not begin with the incarnation, it did not end between the thieves. Brethren and sisters, he is still the infinitely often crucified One.

I will have to bring out the thought by way of illustration; but no illustration will convey it to you. We have heard about some great famine or trial or trouble that came upon some people a hundred or a thousand miles away. Now, while we had something to eat and wear, it did not trouble us so very much, did it? We felt a little sorry for those people; may be we sent them five dollars; but somehow we got along comfortably well, although we knew there was a famine in India. But did you ever have this experience? Did you ever go to a family, and live in that family until you felt yourself to be one of them, and perhaps called them father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and they took you right into their hearts? When you got that near that family, did you not take their sorrows and joys upon you? Anything that happened to that family happened to you, too. Any grief that came to them was your grief. Any joy that came to them was your joy.

Jesus Christ came that near to humanity, not merely in the incarnation, but he did it before the incarnation. But in the incarnation he showed to our sin-blinded eyes what he was before. He is not any further away since he bore human flesh; he is just that near humanity now. He is so near that he suffers with all who suffer; so near that he loves in all who love, and lives in all who live. That is how near he is; for he has taken our nature upon himself, and identified himself with us. That is what Christ has done.

This is how near he is to us all the time; for the more you think of it, the more you see that he suffers in all who suffer; and he is not ashamed to call the poorest and meanest of us brethren. And therefore - notice, that is the sacrifice that he has taken upon himself to save the world - all our little sacrifices for him are only little parts of his great sacrifice. Since his great sacrifice is that he suffers in all who suffer, and has identified himself with the human sorrow and need and trial, he suffers in all my sufferings, and he sacrifices in all my true sacrifices; and my little sacrifices for him are only parts of his great sacrifice manifested in me. And when I live any sacrifice truly, and others are thereby turned to God, who has turned those people back to God? Did I do it? - Christ did it. O, the sacrifice of Christ is an eternal sacrifice!

This is knowing Christ after the Spirit. You know what Paul says: Henceforth I know no man after the flesh; even if I have known Christ after the flesh, I will know him so no more. When a man simply believes that Jesus Christ eighteen hundred years ago was the divine Son of God; that he lived, died, rose again, and ascended up to heaven, - that is simply knowing Christ after the flesh. What you and I want to know is this divine fact of the eternal sacrifice, and that God to-day, in Christ, is giving his life to save humanity. It is a present, personal, everlasting gospel all the way. Away back in Eden, when it was said that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and he should bruise its heel, that did not mean simply that four thousand years from now somebody is going to come and give you power to triumph over sin; it did not mean that simply. It was a present promise right there, that the seed of the woman Eve, should have the power come right into his flesh, then and there, to triumph over Satan in his life, and that is what the everlasting and the ever-present gospel is all the way along. And that is what God was revealing back there. They were considered merely types. They were types, but not primarily types. They were present revelations of the present eternal fact that God was giving his life in Christ to save mankind. Now we can understand something of the old sacrifices back there. When a man brought a sacrifice, what did it represent? Christ, you say. That is true. But there is something more; that sacrifice represented the man who brought it; and if he brought a sin-offering, he was considered as a sinner coming to repentance.

Now I am ready to consider the splendid truth for you and me in some of these expressions back there. "Thou shalt not eat the blood." We have seen how God has given his blood in Christ, his life in Christ. What is that pouring out of the blood, and covering it with the dust? O, do you see that picture of Christ, how that he let his life go out, - let it go out to be hated, to be despised, to be spit upon, to be crucified, to be misunderstood and mistreated, to be just covered with the dust of forgetfulness, apparently, - just as the pouring out of the blood, and it being covered with the dust?

And why was the sacrifice always slain? If it had been beaten and bruised, and then let go, it might have said, I will follow Christ a little way, or to Pilate's judgment hall it may be; but it could not have said, I will follow him to the cross. It is only when the sacrifice actually gives its life that it could speak of a complete consecration. The blood of Christ represents the life of Christ, and also the life of the man who brings the sacrifice. The eating a thing is a symbol of self-appropriation. The blood is the life. The blood of that victim represents the blood of him who is bringing the victim. Now what shall I do with that blood? "Thou shalt not eat the blood." Thou shalt not appropriate thy life unto thyself. The blood of that victim represents my life, or, the Christ-life manifested in me. "Thou shalt not eat the blood." Thou shalt not appropriate thy life unto thyself. That is a statement away back there of the great central truth of the gospel. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." And that means more than we thought it did. We have thought on it like this: If a man would rather sin than give up this life, he will lose eternal life. But if a man will give up this life rather than sin, he will find eternal life. All that is there, but a good deal more than that is there. Whosoever shall save his life for himself, either here or hereafter, loseth both the here and the hereafter. There are some men who are trying to use their lives to have a good time in this world. They are losing this world and the next one, too. There are other men who are trying to use their lives solely for themselves; not for this world, but they are trying to be good, so that they can be saved and happy by and by. They are using their lives simply for themselves. Whosoever saveth his life, or useth it for himself only, either here or hereafter, loseth both the here and the hereafter.

What was the life given for? Lev.17:11: To make an atonement. It is the giving of his life in and through us that makes us one with God. You know a man may believe just as strongly as he can that Jesus Christ was divine, and that God gave his life on Calvary, and not be made one with God at all. It is when that life of God, given in Christ, comes into us and makes us one with him, Christ-like, that we become one with God.

Jesus Christ, the Truth, gave himself that we might have the truth. Jesus Christ, the Way, gave himself that we might find the way back to the Father's house. Jesus Christ, the Life, gave himself that we might have the life. What is it to be a Christian? Is it to be good so that we can be saved? At best, that is but monkery. O, I wish we had more of the spirit of Moses when he said, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written;" - more of that spirit of Paul when he said, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren," if they could by this be saved? And the world that did not know unselfish love back there, but crucified it, will do the same thing here; and the church that had men in it that did not know unselfish love back there, will have men in it that do not know it here. Can you imagine any life going out in more apparent abject failure than did the life of Jesus? Was it defeat? - He triumphed over principalities and powers, although the devils thought they had gotten the victory. The Bible says he triumphed over them on that very cross, and God got the victory that was going to redeem the world. And that is God's business - to give victory. It may not look like victory to us. Some of the sweetest words that have ever come to us, it seems to me, from that servant of God, from the Spirit of Prophecy, are these words: "The life of the trusting Christian is a series of uninterrupted victories, - often not seen and understood to be such here, but to be seen and understood to be such hereafter." Our lives influence other lives, and they influence other lives, until, as Tennyson puts it, -

Our echoes roll from soul to soul, And grow forever and forever. We cannot tell. Leave that with God. Just partake of his life until he can make us channels through which to pour his life to others, - until he can live his life in us, and give himself through us; and then God will take care of all the rest. And only that will enable us to do the work that he wants us to do in this world. How can we love men enough to give our lives for them? - See them as Christ sees them. O, may God reveal to every one of us to-night, to me and to you, the depths of meaning in Christianity, that we may know and understand what it is to be a Christian. May God put this into our hearts and souls, so that the sacred fire of the divine love may consume the sacrifice upon the altar, to come up as a sweet savor unto God, that our lives may flow out in blessing and benediction, and until the true motive is there to do the work which God has for us as a people to do to-day, is my prayer.

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