

God's Love of Justice

Sabbath Afternoon, February 1

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. . . .

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. —*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76, 77.

Our God is a God of mercy. With long-sufferance and tender compassion He deals with the transgressors of His law. And yet, in this our day, when men and women have so many opportunities for becoming familiar with the divine law as revealed in Holy Writ, the great Ruler of the universe cannot behold with any satisfaction the wicked cities, where reign violence and crime. The end of God's forbearance with those who persist in disobedience is approaching rapidly. —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 275.

Under Ahab's rule Israel wandered far from the living God. The dark shadow of apostasy covered the whole land. Images of Baalim and Ashtoreth were everywhere. Idolatrous temples were multiplied. The air was polluted with the smoke of sacrifices offered to false gods. Hill and vale resounded with the drunken cries of a heathen priesthood who sacrificed to the sun, moon, and stars.

The people were taught that these idol gods were deities, ruling by their mystic power the elements of earth, fire, and water. The running brooks, the streams of living water, the gentle dew, the showers of rain which caused the fields to bring forth abundantly—all were ascribed to the favor of Baal and Ashtoreth, instead of to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The people forgot that the living God controlled the sun, the clouds of heaven, and all the powers of nature. —*From Splendor to Shadow*, p. 60.

God's method of dealing with sin is not in harmony with the views cherished by a large class who occupy a prominent position among the professed followers of Christ. Many of these men cherish sin, and laud the benevolence and long-suffering of God, and dwell upon the loving character of Jesus,—all mercy, all tenderness,—while they pass over the threatenings of God's wrath against sin and sinners, and our Saviour's scathing denunciations of hypocrisy and self-deception. It is those who have not a keen sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin that are ready to question the justice of God in punishing with such severity the sins of the Amalekites, Canaanites, and Midianites. Those who love sin are unable to comprehend God's dealings with his subjects. —*"God's Judgment Upon the Midianites," Signs of the Times*, January 6, 1881, par. 7.

Sunday, February 2

Love and Justice

[The Lord] stays His judgments that He may plead with the impenitent. He who exercises "loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth" yearns over His erring children; in every way possible He seeks to teach them the way of life everlasting. Jeremiah 9:24. He had brought the Israelites out of bondage that they might serve Him, the only true and living God. Though they had wandered long in idolatry and had slighted His warnings, yet He now declares His willingness to defer chastisement and grant yet another opportunity for repentance. He makes plain the fact that only by the most thorough heart reformation could the impending doom be averted. In vain would be the trust they might place in the temple and its services. Rites and ceremonies could not atone for sin. Notwithstanding their claim to be the chosen people of God, reformation of heart and of the life practice alone could save them from the inevitable result of continued transgression. — *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 413, 414.

God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10.

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

Every man, woman, and child is God's property, and has been bought with a price, even with the infinite price of the precious blood of the Son of God. God will not tolerate injustice from man to his fellow-men. He will not pass over oppression and wrong. Men in office cannot permit the practice of injustice and yet be clear from the judgment of God. For the sake of their own souls, and for the sake of the souls of others, men in positions of trust should seek to do good to their fellow-men, representing the character of the great Lawgiver. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." . . .

Every work is to be brought into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil, and every man will be rewarded according as his work has been. Those who practice injustice and oppression set at naught the authority of God, and declare by their actions that they have no regard for the word of Christ, who has purchased redemption at an infinite cost. — "Rule in the Fear of God," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 1, 1895.

Monday, February 3

God Is Entirely Good and Righteous

The shortness of time is urged as an incentive for us to seek righteousness and to make Christ our friend. This is not the great motive. It savors of selfishness. Is it necessary that the terrors of the day of God be held before us to compel us through fear to right action? This ought not to be. Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. He says to you, I am the Lord thy God; walk with Me, and I will fill thy path with light. Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, proposes to elevate to companionship with Himself those who come to Him with their burdens, their weaknesses, and their cares. He will make them His dear children, and finally give them an inheritance of more value than the empires of kings, a crown of glory richer than has ever decked the brow of the most exalted earthly monarch.

It is our privilege to have a calm, close, happy walk with Jesus every day we live. —*That I May Know Him*, p. 320.

How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and His love? The psalmist tells us—not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but—"Taste and see that the Lord is good." Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.

Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now. "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Some—yes, a large number—have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. . . . [T]hey neglect the most precious opportunities to make their peace with God. . . .

They have never tasted and learned by experience that the Lord is good. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 221.

For the joy that was set before Him, Christ endured the cross. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for the world, and through this sacrifice comes the greatest blessing that God could bestow—the gift of the Holy Spirit. This blessing is for all who will receive Christ. The fallen world is the battlefield for the greatest conflict the heavenly universe and earthly powers have ever witnessed. It was appointed as the theater on which would be fought out the grand struggle between good and evil, between heaven and hell. Every human being acts a part in this conflict. No one can stand on neutral ground. Men must either accept or reject the world's Redeemer. All are witnesses, either for or against Christ. Christ calls upon those who stand under His banner to engage in the conflict with Him as faithful soldiers, that they may inherit the crown of life. They have been adopted as sons and daughters of God. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 253.

Tuesday, February 4

God's Changeless Character

Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father's law. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died. But to abrogate the law would be to immortalize transgression, and place the world under Satan's control. It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it. Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 762.

God always has been. He is the great I AM. The psalmist declares, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Psalm 90:2. He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. "I am the Lord, I change not," He declares. With Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He is "the same yesterday, and to day and for ever." Hebrews 13:8. He is infinite and omnipresent. No words of ours can describe His greatness and majesty.

Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best.

God does not propose to be called to account for His ways and works. It is for His glory to conceal His purposes now; but by and by they will be revealed in their true importance. But He has not concealed His great love, which lies at the foundation of all His dealings with His children. —*The Faith I Live By*, p. 42.

The Lord desires us to make mention of His goodness and tell of His power. He is honored by the expression of praise and thanksgiving. He says, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." Psalm 50:23. The people of Israel, as they journeyed through the wilderness, praised God in sacred song. The commandments and promises of the Lord were set to music, and all along the journey these were sung by the pilgrim travelers. And in Canaan as they met at their sacred feasts God's wonderful works were to be recounted, and grateful thanksgiving was to be offered to His name. God desired that the whole life of His people should be a life of praise. Thus His way was to be made "known upon earth," His "saving health among all nations." Psalm 67:2.

So it should be now. The people of the world are worshiping false gods. They are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better. God's goodness is to be made known. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." Isaiah 43:12. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 298, 299.

Wednesday, February 5

A Repenting God?

"Let Me alone, . . . that I may consume them," were the words of God. If God had purposed to destroy Israel, who could plead for them? How few but would have left the sinners to their fate! . . .

But Moses discerned ground for hope where there appeared only discouragement and wrath. The words of God, "Let Me alone," he understood not to forbid but to encourage intercession, implying that nothing but the prayers of Moses could save Israel, but that if thus entreated, God would spare His people. He "besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?"

God had signified that He disowned His people. . . .

. . . All [the surrounding nations] were watching to see what the God of Israel would do for His people. Should they now be destroyed, their enemies would triumph, and God would be dishonored. . . .

. . . The Lord listened to [Moses's] pleadings, and granted his unselfish prayer. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 318, 319.

God requires that we confess our sins, and humble our hearts before Him; but at the same time we should have confidence in Him as a tender Father, who will not forsake those who put their trust in Him. . . .

God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes, and grieve His Spirit; but when we repent, and come to Him with contrite hearts, He will not turn us away. There are hindrances to be removed. Wrong feelings have been cherished, and there have been pride, self-sufficiency, impatience, and murmurings. All these separate us from God. Sins must be confessed; there must be a deeper work of grace in the heart. Those who feel weak and discouraged may become strong men of God, and do noble work for the Master. But they must work from a high standpoint; they must be influenced by no selfish motives. —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 350.

God has always given men warning of coming judgments. Those who had faith in His message for their time, and who acted out their faith, in obedience to His commandments, escaped the judgments that fell upon the disobedient and unbelieving. The word came to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me." Noah obeyed and was saved. The message came to Lot, "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." Genesis 7:1; 19:14. Lot placed himself under the guardianship of the heavenly messengers, and was saved. So Christ's disciples were given warning of the destruction of Jerusalem. Those who watched for the sign of the coming ruin, and fled from the city, escaped the destruction. So now we are given warning of Christ's second coming and of the destruction to fall upon the world. Those who heed the warning will be saved. —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 634.

Thursday, February 6

Hold Fast to Love and Justice

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them spitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 29.

There is a day just about to burst upon us when God’s mysteries will be seen, and all His ways vindicated; when justice, mercy, and love will be the attributes of His throne. When the earthly warfare is accomplished, and the saints are all gathered home, our first theme will be the song of Moses, the servant of God. The second theme will be the song of the Lamb, the song of grace and redemption. This song will be louder, loftier, and in sublimer strains, echoing and re-echoing through the heavenly courts. Thus the song of God’s providence is sung, connecting the varying dispensations; for all is now seen without a veil between the legal, the prophetic, and the gospel. The church history upon the earth and the church redeemed in heaven all center around the cross of Calvary. This is the theme, this is the song,—Christ all and in all,—in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is a new song, for it was never before sung in heaven. —*Testimonies for Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 433.

I recommend to you Jesus, my blessed Saviour. I adore Him; I magnify Him. Oh, that I had an immortal tongue, that I could praise Him as I desire! that I could stand before the assembled universe and speak in praise of His matchless charms!

And while I adore and magnify Him, I want you to magnify Him with me. Praise the Lord even when you fall into darkness. Praise Him even in temptation. “Rejoice in the Lord alway,” says the apostle; “and again I say, Rejoice.” Will that bring gloom and darkness into your families? No, indeed; it will bring a sunbeam. You will thus gather rays of eternal light from the throne of glory and scatter them around you. Let me exhort you to engage in this work, scatter this light and life around you, not only in your own path, but in the paths of those with whom you associate. Let it be your object to make those around you better, to elevate them, to point them to heaven and glory, and lead them to seek, above all earthly things, the eternal substance, the immortal inheritance, the riches which are imperishable. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 593.

Friday, February 7

For Further Reading

That I May Know Him, "The Day of Final Settlement," p. 359;
The Upward Look, "God Does Not Change," p. 318.