

"GOD IS LOVE."

1 JOHN 4:16.

The Bible statement that God is love, and also its teaching that he is wise, just and almighty is very generally accepted by Christian people. Our ideas of the great Creator of the Universe admit of nothing short of perfection in each of these respects. But laying aside the Bible and its declarations as to God and his plans, what visible proofs have we of this character of love which the Bible ascribes to him.

Look about for a moment; creation everywhere speaks of God's power and wisdom. We look at distant worlds and note the harmony and beauty of the entire arrangement; "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no place nor language where their voice is not heard." (Psa. 19:2.) They all declare with united voice, The great Creator is infinitely wise and almighty. If we look at the mountains and oceans of earth, they repeat the story of God's wisdom and power. If we look at the insect and its wisdom and skill, or if we look at man, even in his fallen condition, we are forced to admit the wisdom and skill which have so perfectly adapted to their functions our various members; and thus again we are told of God's wisdom and power.

In regard to the justice of God, we have one awfully impressive illustration which should, as God designs, last us to all eternity; and not us only, but all his intelligent creatures. This illustration is found in mankind itself. The aches and pains and sorrows which are associated with the great enemy *death*, which as a great monster has been swallowing up the race for six thousand years, speak to us of God's justice; for we realize that we are sinners, and recognize the justice of his law which declares the just wages of sin to be *death*.

Hence, while groaning and travailing in pain together, and crying, O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this state of bondage to corruption, we recognize the justness of our penalty, that the law which condemns us is holy, and just, and good; that the fault is with us, and that "just and right is he." We wait for Jehovah's favor, hoping for *forgiveness*, hoping that he will *excuse* our sin and receive us back into fellowship. But after waiting over four thousand years, we see that God's justice was so great, so perfect, so unalterable, that even he, could not violate his own just law, but to clear the guilty he must provide a *ransom* – a corresponding price. Had not the justice of the Almighty been *equaled* by his wisdom in arrangement, sad and hopeless would man's case have been. But wisdom had foreseen and a Redeemer was provided, who gave himself a *ransom* for all, on account of which all shall go free.

Ah, yes; we have abundant proof of the completeness of God's justice as well as of his wisdom and power. But now let us look at the proofs of God's love. What are they? Think them over. Can you not think of any proofs of God's love? Surely those who claim that God is *all love*, and that his wisdom, power and justice are *small in comparison* to his love, should be able to give *many* proofs of it, many more than the few we have just given of his wisdom, power and justice. Will they not mention some of the proofs of God's love?

Ah, says some one, I will mention the proofs: the rain, the sunshine, the heat and the cooling breeze, life, health and strength, are proofs of the *love of God* to men.

Nay, my brother, you err there; these are not *proofs*. He sendeth his rain upon the just and upon the unjust, and causeth the sun to shine upon the evil and the good. Life, health and strength are not found in our groaning and dying race, unless we use the words in a modified and accommodated sense. And *then* we find these inapplicable as proofs of God's love; for the most healthy are oftenest the wicked, of whom it is declared: "God is angry with the wicked." – Psa. 7:11.

Then again, what should we say of these proofs when we consider that the sun shines too hotly sometimes, and men are overcome by the heat. Are they overcome by the love of God? When the rains fall in torrents and cause immense destruction of life and property, is that a *proof* of the love of God? Who will say that there are *proofs* of the love of God about us, visible and tangible to the sense of mankind as the evidences we have of his wisdom, justice and power? Day after day, year after year, century after century, cyclones, tempests, hurricanes and earthquakes manifest power, but speak not of God's love. Cholera, small pox, yellow fever, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, malaria, diphtheria, croup, consumption, dyspepsia, and a list too long to repeat, known to all by bitter experiences, weary watchings, and sad partings in death, surely these do not *prove* God's *love*.

Notice one thing dear reader: all of these things *do prove* that God is not so overbalanced in love, that he cannot permit justice to thoroughly scourge the race of condemned sinners. And in the scourgings his justice and power are manifested, though his love, and often his wisdom, are yet veiled. Nevertheless all are there. These things prove that God's love does not override and overthrow his justice, and surely blind must be the mind which sees in the dealings of God past and present, a God wholly love and devoid of justice. Lame indeed is the world's hope if it depends upon God's love to *overthrow* his just sentence against the race, and thus release from condemnation and death.

But again we ask, is there no evidence of God's love – no proof? If so man's case is hopeless. Justice could never clear those whom it had condemned as unworthy of life. Nor could it grant them another trial as though its present sentence were unjust. Is there no *proof* to corroborate the Apostle's statement that "God is love?" Must we take it on blind faith, without a single proof?

Thank God, dear reader, there is *one proof* of God's love, and it is so grand as to be overwhelmingly convincing to him that hath an ear to

hear. That proof is Jesus. The fact that God sent his only begotten Son, that at so great a price God "redeemed us," "bought us," is *proof* of his love, beyond all question. Here we have the proof, the very proof that was in the Apostle's mind when he wrote, God is love; for he declares [R881 : page 3] again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the *propitiation* [Greek, *hilasmos*, THE SATISFACTION] for our sins." 1 John 4:10.

Though the Bible repeats over and over again that God is love, and *promises* that he will prove it by and by, only those who accept of the RANSOM as the expression of his love, and the central feature of the plan of salvation, can see any *proof* of God's love. The more clearly we grasp the plan of which the cross, the ransom is the centre, the more truly we see light in God's light, for this is the *only* manifestation or *proof* of God's love yet given to the world.

The confidence of the saints in God's love and care cannot be offered as proof to others; for it is such proof as faith alone can accept. By faith *we* see proofs of his love and care where others see just the opposite; we walk by faith and not by sight. By our faith we are enabled often to see love, care and providential blessing in adversity, tribulation, opposition and persecutions, and to realize as true, God's assurance that all things good and bad are being overruled for good to us. Hence we see by faith in God's *promises* what we cannot say has yet been demonstrated, except in the *one instance* mentioned, the gift of his Son to be our ransom price, and thus to become in due time our Deliverer.

The next age will DEMONSTRATE in a practical manner the *love* of God as fully and clearly as the past has demonstrated his other attributes; but as yet his love is entirely a subject for faith. A faith which is instructed out of God's Word has for its foundation the Bible's explanation of present circumstances, namely, that the disturbances of nature, (earthquakes, cyclones, etc.) as well as the ravages of death in various forms of disease, are all parts of the *curse or death penalty* to

which our race became subject through the disobedience of our first representative in Eden. From that standpoint also, it looks out into the future with confidence and hope to the promised Restitution, vouched for by the RANSOM.

A faith to be able to appreciate the *love* of God must grasp God's explanation of the *justice* of the curse, and must reach forward and grasp also the as yet unfulfilled assurance that the ransom given by our Lord fully met the obligations of the sinner, and that in consequence the curse shall be removed and be "no more," and all the race shall be blessed when the *due time* shall come. On the contrary, the mind which sees in the catastrophes and curse of the past the *love* of God, and from these facts draws the inference that his love overbalances his justice, and concludes that he *could not*, in the exercise of his justice, blot out the willful sinner, because his *love* would hinder it, would compel him to violate his own decrees and just arrangements regarding the cutting off of willful sinners from life – that mind is in even a worse condition, and more blinded than that which believes that God inflicts these calamities, this "curse," *unjustly* upon beings innocent of any fault in the matter; who claim that man never was perfect, never was tried, and never fell, but was *created imperfect* and then cursed and subjected to evil, that he might *develop* (evolve) greater perfection than God was able to give him in his creation.

How weak and foundationless both of these theories, when examined in the light of facts and God's Word. Both contradict them, and furnish the only reasonable explanation, as well as the strongest imaginable ground for faith and love. Thus seen, God is love, God is just, God is wise, God is almighty. Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

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