

Lesson 7

Saturday, August 08

A Portrait of Love

In patriarchal times the sacrificial offerings connected with divine worship constituted a perpetual reminder of the coming of a Saviour, and thus it was with the entire ritual of the sanctuary services throughout Israel's history. In the ministration of the tabernacle, and of the Temple that afterward took its place, the people were taught each day, by means of types and shadows, the great truths relative to the advent of Christ as Redeemer, Priest, and King; and once each year their minds were carried forward to the closing events of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the final purification of the universe from sin and sinners.

The sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic ritual were ever pointing toward a better service, even a heavenly. The earthly sanctuary was "a figure for the time then present," in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices; its two holy places were "patterns of things in the heavens"; for Christ, our great High Priest, is today "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 9:9, 23; 8:2).

From the day the Lord declared to the serpent in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15), Satan has known that he can never hold absolute sway over the inhabitants of this world. When Adam and his sons began to offer the ceremonial sacrifices ordained by God as a type of the coming Redeemer, Satan discerned in these a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. During the long centuries that have followed, it has been his constant effort to intercept this communion. Untiringly has he sought to misrepresent God and to misinterpret the rites pointing to the Saviour. . . .

While God has desired to teach men that from His own love comes the Gift which reconciles them to Himself, the archenemy of mankind has endeavored to represent God as one who delights in their destruction. Thus the sacrifices and ordinances designed of Heaven to reveal divine love have been perverted.

In word and in deed the Messiah, during His earthly ministry, was to reveal to mankind the glory of God the Father. Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God. . . .

Thus, through patriarchs and prophets, as well as through types and symbols, God spoke to the world concerning the coming of a Deliverer from sin. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 26.

It is a great, a solemn work to obtain a moral fitness for the society of the pure and the blest. . . . Only by conforming to the Word of God can we hope to come to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But we must do this, or we shall never enter heaven. Without purity and holiness of heart, we cannot win the crown of immortal glory.

The life of the soul cannot be sustained, except by the right exercise of the affections heavenward, Christward, Godward. Repentance and faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins are essential, but not all that is required. . . . The Christian's life is now but just begun. He must, as exhorted by the apostle, "go on unto perfection." He must bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. If we believe in Jesus, we will love to think of Him, love to talk of Him, love to pray to Him. He is supreme in our affections. We love that which Christ loves, and hate that which Christ hates. . . .

The Christian life is never at a standstill. It is, it must be, progressive. Our love for Christ should become stronger and stronger. . . .

My brother, my sister, is your soul in the love of God? Many of you have a twilight perception of Christ's excellence, and your soul thrills with joy. You long for a fuller, deeper sense of the Saviour's love. You long to entwine your affections about Him more closely. You are unsatisfied. But do not despair. Give to Jesus the heart's best and holiest affections. Treasure every ray of light. Cherish every desire of the soul after God. Give yourselves the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings. . . . Make haste to ripen for Heaven. . . .

It will cost us something to obtain a Christian experience, and to develop a true and noble character. . . . But the white-robed throng of the redeemed ones, are those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. —*Our High Calling*, p. 338.

Life is a gift of God. Our bodies have been given us to use in God's service, and He desires that we shall care for and appreciate them. We are possessed of physical as well as mental faculties. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and therefore we must do nothing that would defile this entrusted possession. Our bodies must be kept in the best possible condition physically, and under the most spiritual influences, in order that we may make the best use of our talents. Read 1 Corinthians 6:13.

Our bodies belong to God. He paid the price of redemption for the body as well as the soul. . . . God is the great caretaker of the human machinery. In the care of our bodies we must cooperate with Him. Love for God is essential for life and health. In order to have perfect health our hearts must be filled with hope, and love, and joy. —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 147.

Monday, August 10
What Love Does

The truth of God is designed to elevate the receiver, to refine his taste, and to sanctify his judgment. The character of the Christian should be holy, his manners comely, his words without guile. There should be a continual effort to imitate the society he hopes soon to join, that of angels who have never fallen by sin.

No man can be a Christian without having the Spirit of Christ; and if he has the Spirit of Christ, it will be manifested in kind words and a refined, courteous deportment. . . . External change will testify to an internal change. The truth is the sanctifier, the refiner. Received into the heart, it works with hidden power, transforming the character. But those who profess to be followers of Christ, and are at the same time rough, unkind, and uncourteous in words and deportment, have not learned of Jesus. A blustering, overbearing, faultfinding man is not a Christian; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. . . .

Very many who are seeking for happiness will be disappointed in their hopes, because they seek it amiss, and are indulging in sinful tempers and selfish feelings. By neglecting to discharge the little duties and observe the little courtesies of life, they violate the principles on which happiness depends. True happiness is not to be found in self-gratification, but in the path of duty. God desires man to be happy, and for this reason He gave him the precepts of His Law, that in obeying these he might have joy at home and abroad. While he stands in his moral integrity, true to principle, and having the control of all his powers, he cannot be miserable. With its tendrils twined about God, the heart will be full of peace and joy, and the soul will flourish amid unbelief and depravity.

Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. It is the religion of Christ in the heart that causes the words to be gentle, and the demeanor winning, even to those in the humblest walks of life. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness he is constantly bestowing on others, is seen the true dignity of the man. This is a way to gain respect, and extend the sphere of usefulness, which costs but little; and the one who pursues this course will not complain that he does not receive the honor that is his due. But Bible rules must be written on the heart; Bible rules must be carried into the everyday life. —*Reflecting Christ*, p. 305.

We need not begin by trying to love one another. The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously.

In patient forbearance we shall conquer. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toilers that the welfare of Israel is promoted. A word of love and encouragement will do more to subdue the hasty temper and wilful disposition than all the fault-finding and censure that you can heap upon the erring one. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 266.

Tuesday, August 11
What Love Does Not Do

Those who take pains to call attention to their good works, constantly talking of their sinless state and endeavoring to make their religious attainments prominent, are only deceiving their own souls by so doing. A healthy man, who is able to attend to the vocations of life and who goes forth day after day to his labor with buoyant spirits and with a healthy current of blood flowing through his veins, does not call the attention of every one he meets to his soundness of body. Health and vigor are the natural conditions of his life, and therefore he is scarcely conscious that he is in the enjoyment of so rich a boon.

Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart.

All who come within the sphere of his influence perceive the beauty and fragrance of his Christian life, while he himself is unconscious of it, for it is in harmony with his habits and inclinations. He prays for divine light, and loves to walk in that light. It is his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. His life is hid with Christ in God; yet he does not boast of this, nor seem conscious of it. God smiles upon the humble and lowly ones who follow closely in the footsteps of the Master. Angels are attracted to them, and love to linger about their path. They may be passed by as unworthy of notice by those who claim exalted attainments and who delight in making prominent their good works, but heavenly angels bend lovingly over them and are as a wall of fire round about them. —*The Sanctified Life*, pp. 12, 13.

Those who are sanctified through the truth will show that the truth has worked a reformation in their lives, that it is preparing them for translation into the heavenly world. But so long as pride and envy and evil surmising predominate in the life, Christ does not rule in the heart. His love is not in the soul.

In the lives of those who are partakers of the divine nature there is a crucifixion of the haughty, self-sufficient spirit that leads to self-exaltation. In its place the Spirit of Christ abides, and in the life the fruits of the Spirit appear. Having the mind of Christ, His followers reveal the graces of His character.

Nothing short of this will make men acceptable to God. Nothing short of this will give them the pure, holy character that those must have who are admitted to heaven. As soon as a man puts on Christ, an evidence of the change wrought in him is seen in spirit and word and act. A heavenly atmosphere surrounds his soul, for Christ is abiding within. —*This Day With God*, p. 118.

Wednesday, August 12
A Portrait of Jesus

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love. Its two great principles are love to God and love to man. . . . The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. . . .

In the beginning, man was created in the image of God. He was in perfect harmony with the nature and the law of God; the principles of righteousness were written upon his heart. But sin alienated him from his Maker. He no longer reflected the divine image. His heart was at war with the principles of God's law. . . . But "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," that man might be reconciled to God. Through the merits of Christ he can be restored to harmony with his Maker. His heart must be renewed by divine grace; he must have a new life from above. This change is the new birth. — *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 20.

"God is love." His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. . . . Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love.

It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night, follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that leaves appear, and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love.

The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love.

The gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart.

God made to our world the wonderful gift of His only-begotten Son. In the light of this act, it could never be said by the inhabitants of other worlds that God could have done more than He did to show His love for the children of men. He made a sacrifice that defies all computation.

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 59.

Thursday, August 13
Faith, Hope, and Love

The knowledge of the way of the Lord is increasing, and will continue to increase. Heresy and superstition are clothing the world in the sackcloth garments of rebellion and transgression. Literature and cheap fiction of every order is circulated like the leaves of autumn, and the minds of thousands are so taken up with irreligious, cheap trash that there is no place in the mind for solid reading. The Word of God and all that would elevate man from his degradation is passed by with indifference.

But the Word of God contains the truth, and all those who support the truth of God for this time are doing their work for time and for eternity. Those who bring the Word of God into mind and heart are distinctly taking their stand on the side of God and the universe of heaven. They will stand heart to heart and hand to hand in defense of the holy and the pure, that which will stand the test of ages. Those who support error by word and pen and voice, and by the oppression of those who are linked with the truth, are ranged upon the other side, with the first great apostate and the evil men who are his agents. The Word declares of these that they shall "wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." And on one of these two sides, men will labor to the end.

All our powers belong to God. They are His by creation, and by redemption. God has given to every one His measure of power, and He expects each to put it forth on the side of truth. Thus it is to shine forth. The Christian is to stand with undivided interest on the Lord's side. "Now abideth faith, hope, love." Faith looks through discouraging difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith, hope, and love are sisters, and their works blend perfectly to shine amid the moral darkness of the world. The children and the youth are to be instructed, the ignorant are to be taught by patient effort to know what is truth. It is to be given them line upon line. — *This Day With God*, p. 131.

"But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). In the life of Christ this love found perfect expression. He loved us in our sin and degradation. He reached to the very depths of woe to uplift the erring sons and daughters of earth. There was no wearying of His patience, no lessening of His zeal. The waves of mercy, beaten back by proud, impenitent, unthankful hearts, ever returned in a stronger tide of love.

He who is constrained by the love of Christ goes forth among his fellow men to help the helpless and encourage the desponding, to point sinners to God's ideal for His children, and to lead them to Him who alone can enable them to reach this ideal. — *In Heavenly Places*, p. 234.

Friday, August 14
For Further Reading

Our High Calling, "Overcoming Envy and Jealousy," August 16, p. 234.

Our Father Cares, "Christlike Love Blends Heart With Heart," October 9, p. 294.