

George Fifield



1897 GCB Sermons

1897 General Conference Bulletin Sermons
George Fifiield



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Introduction

The Spirit of God fell upon Elder Fifield as he delivered his lectures in February of 1897. So many principles of the Father of love movement are delineated in these lectures, and they are woven together in to a precious fabric.

The present cross, the covenants, the priestly ministry of Christ, the atonement, the character of God and Christ, are all beautifully presented.

These lectures, especially the first two, and the last one, are worthy of careful consideration. Fifield builds on Waggoner's 1893 lectures about the meaning of the blood and presents a concise yet clear expression of the 1888 atonement.

For me personally, these lectures provide a steadying reassurance for the path we have walked the past seven years. We have been led to the same position as Fifield expresses here in these lectures.

Let us give thanks to the Father and the Son for preserving these gems of truth that we might have confidence to press forward in this most precious light.

Yours in the blessed hope of our Gentle God

Adrian Ebens

Sep 19, 2023

1. Despised and Rejected of Men

(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 everyone 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,¹ 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

¹ Fifiield speaks of the breaking of Christ's heart because of our griefs and sorrows. Jesus is touched by the feelings of our infirmities and He feels deep sorrow and grief in beholding our sorrow and grief. He is also pierced by the reality that the human race almost completely rejected the only hope of life. This has nothing to do with God pouring out His supposed wrath on His Son. It is our grief and sorrow that He carries.

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 pleased²;** 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 (weak?) 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**

² Fifiend connects the baptism of Jesus directly to our own experience of knowing we are beloved sons and daughters of God. He also connects Christ's temptation in the wilderness to our own human experiences. Ellen White states that Christ's temptations are repeated in our own lives. Con p 63.

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.³

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

³ In Christ suffering with us and carrying our burdens, our hearts are opened to Him and we gain confidence in Him that He truly cares for us and understands us. He did not forsake us but walked with us in our griefs and sorrows, carrying them for us.

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.**⁴ 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.⁵ Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows that he might

⁴ Here is the result of the little horn power working through the daily desolation and the transgression of desolation to bring a pagan principle into the Christian Church.

⁵ Amen. Let it be so.

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.⁶ 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.

Someone 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.⁷ 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

⁶ Fifiield connects the idea of the character of God to having no darkness at all in Him.

⁷ A connection is made to counterfeit human concepts of justice, making justice opposite to love.

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 2 Cor.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.⁸

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.⁹** 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.

⁸ Fifield presents an interesting view on God's wrath. God loves the sinner but hates the sin. He does not use the language of God allowing the sin to have the consequences of his own choices. Although this thought could be deduced from his thought here.

⁹ Introduces the contrast between design law and imposed law.

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.**¹⁰

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**

¹⁰ The correct thoughts are presented here to show how the law as a school master brings us to Christ, not simply point us to Him.

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.**¹¹

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.**¹² Oh, 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

¹¹ Fifield echoes Waggoner's thought that Humanity is the one that needed the sacrifice not God. He says God propitiated us not the other way around.

¹² Once again, the price was paid to us by the Father, not to the Father for us.

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.¹³

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.**¹⁴

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

¹³ Hallelujah, Amen.

¹⁴ Fifield unlocks the meaning of the several states of the Spirit of Prophecy that state that God could not simply pardon the sinner, but there had to be a penalty. The penalty is inherent in the breaking of the law because it is a design law. To pardon a person that breaks a design law, does not take away the penalty, but the penalty is inherent in the breaking of the law. Thus "the broken law demands the death of the transgressor. GC page 418.

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;¹⁵ 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.

Oh, 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. Oh, 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. **Oh brethren, we have a God that loves sinners, and that forgives sin, and that**

¹⁵ A brilliant thought following up from the previous page revealing why God could not simply forgive. It would not fix the problem of violating the design laws of God. It would cause the sinner to think he can continue in sin that grace might abound.

gives his own life¹⁶, 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

¹⁶ We must receive the life of Christ by His Spirit in order for forgiveness to take effect and deliver us from the condemnation of the law.

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.

(Concluded.)

2. Without the Shedding of Blood

(Wednesday Evening, Feb. 10, 1897.)

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.¹⁷ 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 magiccharm 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**

¹⁷ Just as Nicodemus thought of literal birth when Christ spoke of Spiritual; Just as the women at the well thought of literal water when Jesus spoke of spiritual, so when we typically think of the blood of Christ, we think of His literal blood bringing cleansing by satisfying divine justice. But as Fifield states, the Bible defines blood as life. When the life of Christ comes into us, we are cleansed from sin. Literal blood defiles, spiritual blood, meaning the life of Jesus is what cleanses the soul.

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?¹⁸

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,¹⁹ 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

¹⁸ Fifield beautifully expounds the present cross. The cross of self-denial; the giving of His life for us throughout human history.

¹⁹ Fifield appears to be alluding to Education page 263 and Ellen White's definition of the cross.

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.²⁰

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.

²⁰ Fifiield elegantly explains the High priestly ministry of Christ. Touched by the feelings of our infirmities through all human history. We see defined what Christ achieved in the incarnation; He opened our sin blinded eyes to what He was before the incarnation.

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.²¹ 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.²² 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? Oh, 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?

²¹ "As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer, yet He became man's substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race, with just as much power to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty as when He died upon the cross of Calvary." {FLB 75.4}

²² Fifield dismantles the dispensational covenant system in simple but beautiful language. The types were not simply pointing forward into the future, they were present realities in the times of the Old Testament.

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.²³

The blood of Christ represents the life of Christ, and also the life of the man who brings the sacrifice. The eating of 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

²³ Utterly profound thoughts. The death of Christ reveals His complete consecration in giving His life. This echoes the words of Waggoner also on this point.

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 monkey. Oh, 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. Oh, may God reveal to every one of us tonight, 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.

3. Except a Corn of Wheat Fall into the Ground and Die

(Thursday Evening, Feb. 11, 1897.)

Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. John 12:24,25.

Last night we saw that Christ's life was shed for us not only on Calvary eighteen hundred years ago, but ever since the Rock was smitten at the foundation of the world the river of life has been flowing from the throne, and that now that life is shed not only back there but down here. And except that life be shed for us and through us to others, we do not have repentance, pardon, peace, or power.

Of his resurrection, Jesus said, "The hour is come when the Son of man should be glorified;" of his crucifixion, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Then immediately applying the same principle to us, he said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Which is more beautiful, more glorious, a bin of wheat or a field of waving grain? a flower seed or a full grown flower touched with dainty tints, and shedding fragrance all around? a kernel of corn or a full grown stalk of corn trembling in the breeze? I know that in each instance you will say the latter. One is a promise, the other its fulfillment; one the prophecy merely, the other

its realization. And yet in each instance that seed was cast upon the ground in apparent forgetfulness, - cast there apparently to be covered with dust and forgotten; and yet that seed was cast in faith, resigned to the workings of the life principle within and the life forces without. And the moment of its death became the moment of glorification.

That is the great central truth of Christianity. It is like this: A man has a bin of wheat, which is all he has; and suppose he says, Now, this is all I have, and I am not going to throw it away on the ground; this is my living, I am going to keep it. Well, if he keeps it there in the bin, by and by it will be worthless. If a man says, My life is too precious to me, I am not going to throw it away upon this unappreciative world, I will keep it to myself, he loses it. But if he casts it away to be covered with dust, and forgotten apparently, he gets it back multiplied, and glorified.

Paul says that we glory in tribulation. The Latin word for tribulation is tribulatio; that is, a flail which we use to thresh out grain or wheat with. He says, Not only so, but I glory in the threshing, the flailing. Just as the wheat is separated from the chaff, just so the wheat of our character is separated from the chaff.

Happiness is a pouring in of a new life, that transforms all things into joy. Suppose this room was all dark, and I wanted to get it lighted up; what should I do? carry out all the darkness and turn in the light? - No, turn in the light, and the darkness will take care of itself. The Lord does not take away the little love that a man has, but shows him the love that would stir his own life until it is so full of love that it flows out to everybody all around; and that is salvation. It is a positive thing; and when the Lord wanted to show us what his life was, how did he do it? - He did it in Jesus Christ. What kind of life was it? - God's life. Oh brethren and sisters, his was a life lived in absolute self-forgetfulness, - given, given freely, given to be hated, misunderstood, despised, and spit upon and crucified; and yet given for our sin. That is the life of Christ, and that is the life of God.

I believe that God would have us see that the resurrection means infinitely more than the bringing forth of Christ from the grave - not that I would count that a little thing, but that is a pledge, a promise of a larger resurrection.

There is a spiritual death, the bands of which are broken only by the coming in of the divine life, and that is the resurrection too.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. Eph.1:15-20.

The power of God which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead is God's power. To whom? - To usward.

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Eph.1:20-23.

When Christ was on this earth, he said, I can do nothing of myself. That is true. But we have not always seen that that was so. But here is a place where we can see that Christ could do nothing for himself. But the resurrection power took Christ from that position of weakness and helplessness, and lifted him above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named in earth and heaven.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no

reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil.2:5.

Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil.2:9-11.

Why was he resurrected? - Because he was crucified. Because Christ yielded up his life, did not save it, but was crucified, God took care of the resurrection part. When Paul was crucified with Christ, he gave up all worldly prospects; and so far as the things of this world were concerned, he gave all up. What did he get? 2Cor.4:10,11:-

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Why was he willing always to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Christ? - That the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest in his body.

Now let us look at Paul's history again just a moment: I want you to see what a wonderful character transformation came into his life - how he left his selfish life. God poured his divine unselfish life into him. Watch that transformation. Until that salvation came to him, he was so narrow, so bigoted that he verily thought that he ought to kill everybody that disagreed with him. After that salvation he was broadened, and sweetened, and deepened into the character of Christ, until his heart was so large and tender that he took the world in, and said, I am debtor to all men. Why, said he, I am debtor to you Romans also; I want to come down and preach the gospel to you. God has been so good to me I want to do something. Oh, he has let his life go. Did not God pour in his life unto me as he was crucified with Christ? Was he not resurrected with him

unto a larger life? When we get this broader idea, the crucifixion and resurrection are parallel processes.

But you say, Are you sure that when Paul thus gave his life and got a new life by the giving, he called that the resurrection? Well, let us see. He says:-

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him not having mine own righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings. Phil 3:7-10

He wanted to know the fellowship of his sufferings that he might have the power of his resurrection, and attain to the resurrection of the dead. He said he had not yet attained it fully, but that he was pressing onward. "Being made conformable unto his death," he counted not himself to have attained. He was but attaining unto the resurrection of the dead.

When we let our lives go, God pours in our resurrection life. That it seems to me is one great truth of the crucifixion and resurrection which includes the all in all of the Christian experience. When Christ was baptized, what did he say? - "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection; this is what God has been seeking to reveal all through the centuries. Go back into the sanctuary, and you will see that these truths are set forth just as clearly there as here. They are present tense, present revelation, present gospel. So our Lord's supper and baptism are present truth, present expression of ever-present, ever-lasting gospel. 1Cor.11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Let us see what the Israelites did at the sea; the mountains were on either side, the hosts of Egypt behind them, the Red Sea before them, the desert on the

other side, nothing to eat or drink. What was the only possible human hope of life; not divine hope, but human hope. True, to pass through the hosts of Pharaoh many of them would be killed, but a few might be saved, if they rushed out. This was the only human hope. Now, accepting that, they would die. But the Lord did not leave them to die. He simply gave the bread of heaven, the smitten rock, to sustain their lives. That is baptism. Every one that had a real experience, was baptized when passing through that sea. I am coming to what is to me the most solemn thing of all:-

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Rom.6:3.

What was the death of Christ? - It was a continual giving of his life for others. Just so when you were baptized into Christ, you took upon yourself the pledge of letting your life go, just as he let his life go. When you were baptized, you were baptized into the death of Christ.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Rom.6:4,5.

If we are indeed baptized into his death, it will be to us an absolute end to trouble, quarrel, fault-finding, church difficulties, and all that sort of thing forevermore. Have we ever thought why Christ did not find fault, although bruised in every way until they took his life upon the cross? It was because he had given his life. **And they took it not only at his crucifixion, but before that time, in every look of scorn, by every scowl, by lack of appreciation, by hardness of heart, by their abuse and their names; but he did not complain, did not find any fault; because he had given his life he could not find fault.** Some one may say, How can I have any part in that, when I have to stay at home and work in comparative obscurity? Now if you say that, you have missed the lesson so far. Suppose you are so situated that the only thing you can do is to stay at home and work. You have a large family, and it takes your whole time, and you can't get away to do anything but that. Now, there are

two ways you can do that: one way is to grumble about it, and wish you didn't have so many things to bother you, wish you could be free, and didn't have to live all the time in this sort of way; and grow meaner and smaller all the time. And the other way, my brother and sister, is if that is the best you can do, just to accept the sacrifice for Christ's sake; and the pledge of God in this thing is that just in proportion as that is distasteful to you, you can accept the sacrifice for love's sake. When you accept it, then, for Christ's sake, he says, Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto me. Then just in proportion as that is humiliating and distasteful to you, and it is crucifixion to you, just in that proportion God will bring to you in that thing the resurrection power in the larger sense. That is what he will do. He wants to glorify every kitchen and every shop by this truth.

Some one says, O, there are many injustices in life that we have to accept. Yes, Christianity does not deny that. Job's false comforters denied it. They said, Job, you have been a very wicked man; you may have deserved all this, or you would not have gotten it. Is that true? There are injustices in life, and Job knew it; and the only way in which he stood that ordeal was that he had obtained a glimpse of the Saviour. But these injustices are not the injustices of God; they are the injustices of sin. As long as sin exists, injustice will exist; just as long as one man sins, another man will be sinned against. And that is one of the reasons why sin is so bad that God in love wants to get it out of the universe just as quickly as he can.

But there is another point right here. We have not seen the whole end of the story yet; when we do, there will not be any injustice. Whittier says:-

Ours the seed-time; God alone Beholds the end of what is sown. Our vision, weak and dim - The harvest time is hid within. Now suppose the man who is sowing his corn or wheat forgets all about the harvest, just as too often the future life and all its joys pass out of our minds. Here is a man's bin of wheat, and it is all he has, and he is casting that away on the ground without a thought of any harvest to come. Now tell me, under those circumstances would not life to that man seem to be all labor and all loss, without any returns or any compensating joys? When he takes the harvest time into consideration, it is

that which is going to make up for all these apparent injustices of the seed-time. And what is this pledge of resurrection that we have been talking about? If you and I will accept the sacrifice wherever we are, and let the life go in that sacrifice, God will bring in the resurrection power; so that when the harvest comes, you and I will see that there has not been any injustice at all. Every sowing will have its reaping. Every giving of the life will have its splendid and eternal reward. And when the whole account is settled, every crooked place will be made straight, every rough place will be made smooth and every hill will be brought low; and all the world will see the glory of the goodness of God. And he does not want us to get away over yonder before we believe it, and see it; he wants us to take the splendid joys of the fact, and believe them now and all the time. And so he wants to come and live in our lives thus, and love in our lives thus, and through us reach out for others.

1 John says, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Sons and daughters of the Lord now, and still only promises and prophecies of some splendor that we cannot take in that is going to come to us by and by! Do you think that everybody is going to be alike in heaven? I think it would be monotonous to live in that sort of a country. There is an infinite variety of beautiful faces and beautiful forms and beautiful tints, in this world even; and there is going to be an infinite variety of beautiful characters in that world beyond. But every one of them will be just glorified, developed possibilities that God put in men and women down here. And when I think of it, Oh, I think it worth living for and worth dying for! I wonder how many of us have had this thought in our lives.

4. Charity – Summary of discourse

(Sunday Evening, Feb. 14, 1897.)

The text is 1Cor.13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Here is surely a wonderful comparison. Faith, without which man's life would be like that of the beasts that perish, bounded by the narrow span between the waking and the evening. Faith that sweeps back the horizon of our existence until eternity, with all its sublime possibilities, is brought as a motive power into our lives. How great is faith! Yet it is not the greatest, or the grandest. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Hope, without which the heart would break. Hope that in every darkest night still whispers of the dawning morrow; on the brow of the blackest storm-cloud ever writing the bow of promise. How grand is hope! Yet it is neither the greatest, nor the grandest; for the greatest of these is charity.

We have lost the beauty of this word, as we have that of many others, by conventional usage. Charity is not the coin flung to the beggar, nor is it that quality of the mind which enables us to think and say that a lie is as good as the truth, if one believes it sincerely. Truth is all-important; and Christ came from heaven to earth, saying, "I am the truth." God himself sanctifies us only through the truth. Still, while charity does not depreciate the importance of truth, it is that which looks upon a man's opinions beyond their truth or their falsehood, their orthodoxy or their heterodoxy, their popularity or their lack of popularity; beyond man's social state; beyond his education or his ignorance, his poverty or his wealth; beyond even his morality or immorality; and back of it all, and beyond it all, and away down underneath it all, charity sees a human soul. A poor, deformed, shrunken thing it may be, infinitely missing the high possibility for which God created it; and yet a human soul still, so precious as to cause Christ to give his life for it. And charity loves it not for what it is merely, but for what it is capable of becoming, and gives itself in love and longing to bring out the possible in that life.

Peter says, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." So charity is the highest Christian grace, the topmost round of the Christian's ladder from which the soul steps off to heaven with its eternal joys.

It is the love of God - not merely our love to God, but his love acting in our hearts as it does in his. We read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This word "world" is cosmos. It means "order, harmony, arrangement, beauty." But one says, The world was full of sin, out of order, out of harmony, almost a chaos instead of a cosmos. But God's keen eye of love saw the possible cosmos underneath the chaos, and gave himself in his Son to bring out that possible in the world, and in our lives. The second verse in the Bible says, "The Spirit of God moved [or brooded] upon the face of the waters." O, this brooding love is love not of what is merely, but of what is to be! It is thus that God's Spirit broods not only over the chaos in the unformed world, but over the chaos in every human heart and life. As Carlyle says, "With other eyes could I now look upon my fellow men; with an infinite love, an infinite pity. Poor, wandering, wayward man! Art thou not tried and beaten with stripes, even as I am, and ever? Whether thou wearest the royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, thou art so weary and so heavy-laden, and thy bed of rest is but a grave. O, my brother, my brother, why cannot I clasp thee to my bosom and wipe all thy tears away? Man, with his so mad wants and so mean endeavors, had become the dearer to me; and even for his sufferings and his sins I now first named his 'brother'."

This is the only true way of looking at humanity. John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." So the best of us are only prophecies and possibilities of some grand future beyond our utmost dreaming. Humanity takes on new glory when we behold it thus, and underneath the rough exterior Love's keen eye beholds some good in every heart.

Some people make great effort to love God. They seem to seek to project their love into space, hoping it will hit him somewhere. God wants us to love him here, enshrined as he is in a weary and hungry-hearted humanity. He says, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me. In the beautiful legend of Sir Launfal, the man who had sought afar through all his life for Christ and the Holy Grail, when he realized his failure, and felt himself akin

to that other failure in the beggar's form before him, giving the asked-for coin not in coldness, but in love, found there what he had been seeking in vain all his life, for the beggar was transformed before his gaze into the image of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5. God is Love. Summary of Discourse

(Wednesday Evening, Feb. 17, 1897.)

ELDER FIFIELD spoke from the text, Jer.17:5-8. The idea many have of Christianity is this: God wants us to deny ourselves of everything here and be miserable in this world, for the sake of being happy by and by. But Satan, on the contrary, wants us to have a good time here, but is not thinking of the future. Never was there a greater libel on my Father. God is the best friend of the human race. He seeks to give us the greatest possible amount of happiness now and evermore, ever wishing to lift us into greater possibilities of joy; while Satan is the greatest enemy of mankind, never lifting the crystal goblet of bliss to the human lips, without dashing it to the ground as soon as a single drop has been tasted. **Satan lied about God in the beginning, saying he was arbitrary and unjust and unkind; and all mankind, it would seem, have believed that lie.** So far is this from the truth that the inspired Word tells us, "God is love." **He is not love and justice, for justice is only an attribute of love.** How can he who loves all men with an immortal love be unjust to any? Mercy and grace are only manifestations of love. Even the omniscience of God is the result of his love; because he is all-loving, he can be all-knowing. Hatred cannot know love.

Once infinite Love walked the earth in human form, and they crucified him, because they knew him not. But love seeth and comprehendeth all things. The power of God to make men righteous, is simply the power of his love to win men to love, which flows out in the acts of love. Even the wrath of God spoken of throughout the Bible, is his wrath not against the sinner, but against the sin. He hates the sin, because it is the enemy of the sinner whom he loves. The measure of his love for the sinner is the measure of his wrath against the sin. That wrath will never cease until sin shall be no more. His desire is, however,

to save the sinner from his sin, so that he may not perish with it. When he does thus perish, the Lord says, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways."

Thus every attribute of God is simply the attribute of love. And love includes the all in all of our Father. His laws are simply the laws of a kind Father, intended to promote the happiness of his children. They are not arbitrary. It is not that God, sitting up on some high throne, said to mankind, You do thus and so, and I will let you live; but you do otherwise, and I will kill you. God does not kill. He is the Fountain of life. His laws are not so simply because he said so, but even so because they were so. In infinite wisdom he foreknew the underlying principles of happiness and life, and in infinite love he foretold these principles, saying, This way, my child; here is the joy and peace and life forevermore. Don't go that way. That way is misery and death. Every precept of the decalogue, which is the epitome of his law, directly speaks from this principle. He sought to lift man into the worship of one God and Father, that he might unite him into one loving family of brothers and sisters.

No human mind can comprehend God in his greatness, but should ever in humility hold itself in readiness to walk into a larger light. So God prohibits the imaging of him. For an image is but a creed in marble, seeking to make prominent the person, that which is at best but partial and incomplete. God would have all men regard his name with reverence, that that sacred name might have power to help lift men nearer him, and therefore nearer each other. In the Sabbath he established the fact that the only true God was the Creator. All false worship is a departure from the worship of the Creator to the worship of the created. He who worships the Creator only, sees an infinity of beauty which he cannot fathom, in each flower at his feet; and so masked in humility, ever holds himself ready to know more of the infinity, of him who created not only the flower, but all the countless worlds. **The happiest family, other things being equal, is one that loves and honors father and mother most. "Thou shalt not kill," guards the joy of living. "Thou shalt not steal," guards the joy of property honestly earned. "Thou shalt not commit**

adultery," guards the joy of family relation. "Thou shalt not bear false witness," guards the joy of reputation, also of property and life. "Thou shalt not covet," cuts off the tap-root of sin in the thought, which leads to all transgression. How solicitous our Father is of our utmost possible joy.

The obedience to these principles is happiness and life. It is unthinkable that there could be a time when, or a world where, the disobedience to these principles among intelligent beings, would not constitute misery and death. It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one precept of God's law to change. For the law rests in the infinite love which never changes. **This law, when given to man, was not designed to be a dead law, condemning the human heart; but it was a living law, to have the divine, creative power of the gospel in it, to uplift the life - so many divine, creative promises. "Thou shalt have no other God's before me." "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."** These are promises to the soul which sees them in the light of the gospel, and through faith in Christ rests on them; they will become the everlasting arms of love to uphold and support him forevermore. God requires us to form characters in harmony with his, not simply because he delights in such a character, but because it is the only possible basis of joy and peace. No soul, at last, will be shut out of the everlasting kingdom of joy, by any gate thrust in his face, but rather by his own incapacity to enter there. His life must be built in harmony with the principles of joy and happiness. He must be born again into these principles, and have them developed in his life; else to him the eternal life of the kingdom of joy is an impossibility.

George Fifiield
1897 GCB Sermons

Taking the principles developed by Waggoner and Jones, Fifiield weaves together a pure gospel fabric in his presentations. The atonement, the gospel, the ministry of Christ, the character of God, are all beautifully expressed. It is beautiful to read and digest. These sermons are vital for those interested in the Father of love movement. Here is just one example of many where Fifiield contrasts the common Christian view of atonement with the Biblical one.

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.**