

GOODNESS

The item directly below is part of a symposium on the Fruits of the Spirit, entitled GOODNESS by Brother Edward O. Lee, 1914 Convention Report starting on P. 48.

One has said that Goodness is Love in action, and we understand that all of these Christian virtues and graces that we have been considering today are fruits of the Spirit, and that only as we are rooted and grounded in love are we able to bring forth any of these. We understand, then, that this grace, this virtue, or goodness, is a fruit of Love, and only as we are rooted and grounded in love—in the love of God—can we be able to show the spirit of goodness in our daily lives. How is it that Paul could say of himself that in me, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and if we have to make such a confession as that, how can we expect to show forth any goodness in our character or our daily walk in life? We see it is possible only as we are rooted and grounded in love, only as we come into Jesus Christ by faith, being justified and consecrated unto Him and becoming a part of Him. Only then is it possible for us in any way to have any kind of goodness or to show goodness in any manner.

We know as we look at God's character, as we watch His dealings with us now in this time, we are gathered here to look at His goodness and love that is manifest to us, especially to us, His children, His favored children at this time. As we behold the love of God we can look back to the past, and can look forward to the future by the eye of faith and see and know and be convinced that God is good. And as we see that God is good, it stimulates us to a desire that we have something of that character which we see in God. And how do we see this goodness of God? We see it upon the chart of the ages: The Plan of the Ages. We could not see that plan without seeing and realizing how good God is, and when we see how good God is, it leads us to repentance. For it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance.

We used to think that it was God's cruelty, that it was His fear that would lead us to repentance; but we see how that kind of faith in God led men to torture their brethren, and burn them at the stake. That kind of fear of God and that kind of faith in and opinion about God led men to be demons themselves and not to be good. How much more should we when we see on the Chart of the Ages, and in Jesus Christ, His life and suffering and death, how God has revealed unto us His goodness in that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish nor go to eternal torment, but have everlasting life. But as we come into Jesus Christ and become rooted and grounded in love we drink of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and only as we drink of His Spirit can we be in any measure good; and the more we look into the life of Jesus Christ, the more we look into His wonderful life—His long-suffering, His patience and His ignominious death to save us, we are amazed and wonder at His love, and we gratefully accept the privilege

that is offered unto us of suffering with Him that we may also be glorified together with Him.

And as we are rooted and grounded in love, how we long to exercise in our daily conduct this same spirit of goodness. Christ exercised this spirit of goodness in His treatment of His friends and His enemies, showing kindness and sympathy and compassion through all of His life, and we find He is then our Pattern, Model and Example, and we look to Him, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God; and the more we see of His goodness, the more we want to show in our conduct with others. And I hope that while we are here in this town where we have been treated so kindly and gently, not only spiritually but physically, that we also in our dealings with them can show them goodness and kindness and show them that we have been with the Lord Jesus. And as we look on the Chart of the Ages which is never tiresome and never becomes old, but is a continual picture to us of God's love and goodness to the children of men, how He in His kindness makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust, that is the spirit we should show. We realize that not only in this convention when we are assembled for the extreme enjoyment of God's goodness, but from the beginning of our Christian race, we have rejoiced to see God's goodness and we can be determined to rejoice, and it shall be our privilege to be in the house of the Lord and to enjoy His glory through all eternity.

I want to quote the last verse of the 23rd Psalm: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Good, the more communicated, the more abundant grows.—Milton

How far that little candle throws his beams! so shines a good deed in a naughty world.—Shakespeare.

He that does good for good's sake, seeks neither praise nor reward, though sure of both at last.—William Penn.

There was never law or sect or opinion did so much magnify goodness as the Christian religion doth.—Bacon.

Love blinds us to faults; hatred blinds us to virtues.—M. Ibn Ezra.