

TRIUMPH OF LOVE OVER JUSTICE

(Given by Pastor Russell – 1915 Convention Report, Supplement, begin page 78.)

THE Apostle says “Mercy rejoiceth over Justice.” This text signifies that love gained the victory over justice, because mercy is merely the outward or actual expression of love, and so we might reason in what way does divine mercy or love gain the victory over divine justice, and in so doing, I believe we will be learning something for ourselves, because we should be copies of God. We are to study His method, His manner, and His many ways, in order that we may have His wisdom, and, in proportion as you and I receive His spirit, His mind, in that same proportion we will have the spirit of sons. When, therefore, we shall see how God’s love gains the victory over His justice, we shall learn how it ought to be with us, in order that we might become like Him.

In the case of divine love and divine justice, we are to remember that our Heavenly Father is perfect in all these qualities and attributes. His justice is perfect, and His love is perfect, but, inasmuch as these are inherent, invisible qualities of the divine nature, we could not study them unless they were manifested. They have been manifested. It is the manifestation of these qualities, therefore, that especially interests us. We are not to think what He is to do to attain perfection, because we know that He has always been perfect, but we are to see how these attributes manifest themselves, that thus we may learn valuable lessons.

It seems to me, and increasingly so, that there is no lesson that the Lord’s people need to learn more than this particular lesson of the relationship of justice to love, and how we may practice them as God practices them; and yet, with some variations too, for He has some rights which we do not have.

In the case of God, we see that His love operated in the very beginning when He created His Son to be His logos, and it was afterwards seen in angels and man. Then we see that the fall of our race brought into operation divine justice, for it was justice that decreed that man, on account of his disobedience, should not live, but die. “Dying, thou shalt die” was the fiat of justice, and at the same time, love was obliged to agree with that. When justice decreed that death must result from transgression, love responds, and says, “Yes; that’s the proper thing.” Love agrees that it is altogether proper for man to die as a result of sin, not only because it is right for God to be just and He must be in harmony with His own law, but also because it would not be good for man to live everlastingly in an imperfect, fallen condition. If He had allowed him to live on in imperfection and not die, we can hardly imagine what a tremendous power he would have had in the world by this time. Even as it is, we see that some of our race in three score years and ten are able to cultivate such qualities of mind and character as to give them the ascendancy over the remainder of the race, and were they permitted to live on indefinitely, they would undoubtedly bring all the others into captivity to them. They might become so powerful as the years go on that one might become a giant and be able to do whatever he might desire to do, and thus be very tyrannical. Except man should

exercise the attributes of his character in harmony with those of the divine nature, because of the great injury he would do to others of the race, he ought not to be permitted to live. And thus, in the divine arrangement, we see love agreeing with justice that sinful man ought not to live, but die. Then again, when our whole race came under the sentence of death, God might have cut us off much more quickly than he did, had He not had in mind the very plan which we are now learning—the divine plan of the ages. Man was to learn certain lessons during the present in order that he might profit by them in the future. So, now, we see that God has arranged a very reasonable and loving way in dealing with the sinner in harmony with His great plan. In His wonderful plan He has arranged to redeem man from this death condition, because He intends to restore him in due time. All of the experiences of the present life will have a bearing upon the members of the fallen race during the time of their restoration in the age to come. He has planned it, so that we may have these experiences and learn these needful lessons and then go down into the tomb—and thus, quietly, for six thousand years, the world has been getting its first lesson in its education along the line of sin—as to what a terrible thing sin is, how hard it is to control, what its downward tendencies are, what it means to encourage it in one's heart, how hardening of the heart inevitably results from its practice. Thus twenty thousand millions of our race have had a great schooling time for six thousand years.

It seems to me, I can see a great deal of wisdom in His plan. His love was not inactive, but since He could not show man any love—could not resist justice in this matter—love had already arranged a plan whereby redemption would come, whereby love would triumph over justice. After justice had reigned for six thousand years, during which the world had learned its lessons with respect to the heinousness of sin in all its various forms, and had consigned its subjects to the silence of the tomb—the triumph of justice—love redeeming became love restoring, calling them forth from the tomb during the thousand years of its reign, so that ultimately when death and hell shall have delivered up all that were in them, and death shall be no more, love will have triumphed over justice, and so we read, “O death where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be unto God [God is love] who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is one of the wonderful things I see in the Bible—the more wonderful, the more I understand it. God always maintains His justice, and He always maintains His love, and we are being blest by both. Justice having triumphed over the world for six thousand years has brought our race down to sheol, hades, death, the tomb. Love, in the meantime, began to operate in harmony with justice, and has given the great sacrifice of Jesus, and at the time of the return of the Lord, has arranged through His reign of a thousand years, to awaken them from the sleep of death, to raise them from the tomb. We can thus see in the Bible proposition what a great equality or balance God has manifested. Since twenty thousand millions of souls have sinned, it would, in some way, require twenty-thousand-million redeemers, but when we see how God is operating, we wonder at His arrangement. He saw to it that only one man would ever be condemned to death. Through one man condemnation came upon all men. “As by man came death, by man came also resurrection of the dead.” One man was a sinner; one man was a redeemer. Beautiful! We

never heard of anything like this except in God's plan. Just think of a great plan covering six thousand years in which the salvation of nearly twenty-thousand-millions of human creatures is involved, and yet, all so easily and perfectly poised and balanced that through the disobedience of one man sin would enter the world, and death by sin, in order that, in due time, the redemptive work of one man might fully offset the degrading work of the other one, and thus balance the account of the great day of justice, wherein all were condemned in one, by the sacrifice of the one redeemer, through whose sacrifice love provided for the recovery of all from the power of death, so that death would no longer have any dominion over them—justice and love co-operating to produce that great balance—love gained the great victory! While justice will never be cheated out of its part, yet love gains the victory and provides the way out of the difficulty, and does this at the expense of the one by whom the whole plan has been consummated. While the penalty is upon all, but one has been required to pay the penalty. This had to be done by His sacrifice. How is that? Is that not unjust? Oh, no! The Bible assures us that God stated the proposition beforehand to Jesus, and Jesus was in full agreement with it—not merely the man Jesus, but primarily it was made to the Logos, the Word, the Messenger—Michael, the God-like One. In this whole matter then, He acquiesced. It was even presented to Him as a great bargain, that, by the purchase of the whole race through His sacrifice, He might obtain the great honor and glory of Messiah—the opportunity of blessing the thousands-of-millions of humanity who were condemned to death; and then, what more? Oh, much more, viz., that He would be exalted to the divine nature through all eternity, far above angels, principalities, powers, and every name that is named, and **ALL OF THIS IS THE GREAT TRIUMPH OF LOVE OVER JUSTICE**. While justice remains forever inviolate throughout eternity, yet love gains the victory, and justice and mercy rejoice.

My dear brethren, when we see what the Bible teaches about the divine plan, it gives us the confidence in the Bible that we can get from no other quarter. It is the study of the Bible from the outside, by those who try to pick things to pieces, and the employment of their brains against the Bible, that proves that the professors of our day are the worst of all times. It is only when we perceive from the inside, that we see the strength of the Bible. No human mind ever made such a plan. It is surely divine. It is surely biblical. We did not discover it. It was shown to us in due time. We know it is of God; and the book that contains that message is surely the Word of God, and it must be that all those holy men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Wonderful message! God's spirit indicted this message. The many men who uttered the words did not know what they meant. They were meant for us, not for them. They were written for our instruction upon whom have come the end of the ages. And then, we could not understand their words until something occurred to us, and that something was that we received the begetting of the Holy Spirit with the subsequent and consequent enlightenment, and this brought these things to our attention and enabled us to understand their meaning. So the Apostle writes to some, you remember, "After that you were illuminated." We now understand what it means to be illuminated. The illumination is

primarily the work of the Holy Spirit of God which we received when we came into His family at the time of our consecration unto death. This illumination of the church had its beginning at Pentecost. Up to that time the spirit had not yet been given. The early church had to wait until Jesus had finished His sacrifice for sin, had ascended up on high as the great High Priest to appear in the presence of God for us, to sprinkle the blood of His sacrifice upon the mercy seat on our behalf, and become the Advocate of all those who would follow in His steps, having made satisfaction for their sins, and by the imputation of His own merit to the consecrated, and thereby making them acceptable to the Father—not until then could they receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit. But ever since then this Spirit has been with the church, begetting each one who would come into the same class. This, however, is not all, for after that comes the Illumination as the result of the begetting. Because we are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry ABBA, FATHER. Not only does this illumination enable us to understand things previously hidden from our eyes, but thereafter all the word of God becomes food for us, that we may grow thereby in grace, in knowledge, in justice, in all the qualities of the divine character, that thus we may become more and more like our Father who is in heaven.

Having then seen how divine justice operates in the blessings of mankind up to the present time, we will now look further and see that divine mercy is about to gain a great victory for the whole world. It will require the entire thousand years of Messiah's reign before mercy will have triumphed over justice. All through that thousand years, dear friends, we perceive what love will be doing for the world of mankind. It will be doing everything that can be done to lift man up from degradation. It will all come through the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be God's agent of justice and love, through whom the blessings will come through all that thousand years; and then, the church will be associated with Him in His kingdom, glory and honor—associated with Him in this work of love. It will operate through us also. In order that we may be of that same character, we must not only be begotten by the spirit, but must also manifest this spirit, must be quickened by it, and eventually in the first resurrection be born of this spirit, share His glory, and be associated with Him in this work of love for mankind during the entire thousand years, at the conclusion of which, this uplifting work of divine love will have been accomplished. The world by that time will have received its blessings. All through this wonderful plan the principles of absolute justice and absolute love will be observed—both operating in full harmony. Christ is the connecting link between them—His sacrifice, the connecting link, making it possible.

How will God's justice during the future operate toward the world of mankind? Some have difficulty in thinking along this line—that the world in the future will have its sins forgiven. Is it not true that God has a reckoning? Will He not hold against the world something for wrongs committed in the past? Will the murderer have the same opportunity as those who have been more noble in their lives? Where will justice be represented in the future in His dealings with men? We believe that God's dealings will be associated with justice all the way through; that, while love will be specially operative

during the whole of the millennial age, yet justice will never be violated. Will mankind, in the future, be punished for sins of the present time? Yes, and no. No; not in the sense that we are punished for sins in the past, for this would nullify the work that Christ accomplished in His death in making satisfaction for Adamic sin. Satisfaction having been made by Christ for the believer's sins, he is no longer punishable for them. The same principle will operate in the future.

For the present, we will consider the church. Suppose a man or woman had lived in such a way as to have gotten himself or herself into a very bad condition of body, mind, or what not. These things will have more or less of a penalty upon them after they have become Christians. Suppose Mr. A., B. or C. had been living a profane life in some way—a dishonorable life. Suppose that God's grace now reaches them and they learn the provision that God has made in Christ, and see that God is ready to forgive their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness; they accept His terms, and we say, their sins are forgiven. What do we mean? We mean that God no longer holds any displeasure against a person who has come into harmony with the divine authority. Whenever anyone comes into harmony with God in His appointed way, His justice is no longer opposed to such an one in the sense of condemning him. Nevertheless, he will have in his body or mind certain punishments resulting from his previous sinful course of life. In the event he has lived a sinful life for a long time, then will the evil be that more deeply entrenched in his mortal body, and he will consequently have all the greater fight to overcome these deeply imbedded tendencies to sin. Whereas, in the case of one who has previously lived a good, moral life in all good conscience, that one will have just that much less to overcome. If, through evil deeds, the mind of a person has become poisoned, that person will have to battle all his life against the seeds of error thus sown, not in the way of a direct punishment for his wrong doing, but in the way of a natural law of punishment, because the new creature is to be developed in the flesh wherein the bad seeds have been planted. It is like a piece of land which had been given over, for a long time, to some kind of weed, in which case the roots will have become deeply entrenched in that time. This land may afterwards be changed into a wheat field, and you might sow wheat in that field, but we know from experience that the weeds will be there also, and the wheat will not do so well because of this previous foul condition when it was given over for the time to the weeds. It is even so with our hearts and our bodies. After we have given them to the Lord they are what they were before, only He has accepted them as new creatures. His grace has provided a way whereby our sins are covered, and they are no longer chargeable to us, but the evil seeds are still there, and that individual who has a large planting in early or later life, will have to his dying day a great battle against these poisonous weeds, and that will be proper punishment for the wrong course which he had previously pursued. Thus it is that justice is not relieving us of anything, but mercy is passing our sins by and counting us as new creatures, while justice continues to operate. You and I know full well that, to whatever extent we yield our minds to sinful practices, to that same extent we become favorable to the wrong conditions for the growth of wheat. The weeds are there. It behooves us to fight a good fight against these wrongs and errors entrenched in our

minds. We are new creatures, but we must fight a great fight against the weeds in the field. We must be all the more on guard against every sinful, evil thought of mind so that we may be pure in every word, deed and thought. All new creatures know that this battle is on.

So it will be in the future. The world will get retribution for their sins the same as we do for ours. While their sins will be set aside so as not to exact a penalty on account of being turned over to Christ, yet every member of the human family, in so far as they know wrong and do it intentionally, will be under a poisonous influence, and it will require years and years of the millennium to get free from it. Should we think that God would give the world any more than we get? Surely not. We are glad for all that God has done for us, as well as for what He intends to do for the world. The opportunity is ours now, but it will be to the world in the future. There will be a difference, however, for whereas our sins are covered for a certain purpose, theirs will be blotted out.

This matter of covering our sins is to permit us to be treated as new creatures. This covering lasts from the time we become Christians on during all of our experiences unto the end of our journey here below. If one should become a Christian at the age of thirty years, and should then live to be sixty, that one will have thirty years during which to fight against these bad seeds. Each Christian will have to battle against all such evil tendencies clear down until the end of this present life, and thus each one will have had a great conflict, and, by that time, will have demonstrated to the Lord to what extent one has been loyal and true in really striving against sin.

It is not merely striving against error, but against sin. We have all been under a cloud of error in times past. Our minds have been in error. We all see that. But this is not the main thing. It is important indeed to have recognized this condition and come out into the light, but this is not the main thing. It is important only in a relative way. The most important thing is to get rid of SIN itself. There are errors of mind, of doctrine, of thought, of morals, of character, of justice by practicing injustice—all of these things had been going on in common life from childhood. We did not know what they really meant. Nobody preached about them; parents did not teach about them; but now, we see very clearly what the Bible has to say about these things. Now, God wishes His people to be free from the doctrinal errors, but He especially wishes them to be free from any sympathy with sin, unrighteousness, iniquity, or injustice. In other words, God wishes you and me to be very loyal to the Golden Rule. That is the first proposition; and to learn that lesson is sometimes the experience of years. I know some who are highly esteemed, and yet they seem to be lacking along this line—not referring, however, to anyone present. Very many have not practiced JUSTICE in their lives. They are unjust in their dealings with their families—husbands deal unjustly with their wives, and vice versa, parents deal unjustly with their children, and children with their parents—in some, it seems that injustice is the rule rather than justice. From the time we become followers of Jesus, and see how justice is written in the law, from that time we begin to know that He expects us to observe the Golden Rule. We should begin right in our own families, with our parents, our children, our companions in life. This should, and will affect all the little

affairs of life. Time would fail to enumerate them. It will affect our walk—the way we walk in the house—the way we clean our shoes at the door, in fact, everything we do, or say. It applies everywhere, and in everything. Do unto others as you would they should do unto you. If we could get that thoroughly worked-down into our hearts and lives, it would indeed prove to be one of the greatest blessings in our lives, not only to ourselves, but also to many others. There are brethren, and there are sisters, who, from outward appearance, and sometimes I know these things from letters (I do not intend to judge) but from their letters I know that many are not as far advanced as they might be in this respect. Measure not by the world. The world does not know this rule. We are not to measure them by this rule. We are not to expect from them as much as we do from ourselves. Neither should we measure ourselves by other Christians. Some who are called Christians are morally inclined, and we appreciate their characters, but we are not to measure ourselves by them, because many of them have never been begotten of the spirit at all, and have never come into the school of Christ at all; so, we should not measure ourselves by them, but by the word of the Lord which says, “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holiness of living and Godliness.” This statement of the Apostle implies that we are a special class, different from every other people in the world—a peculiar people, as he elsewhere puts it—not in dress, but zealous for good works, zealous for everything that is right, laying down our lives for the truth, in the service of others, not only endeavoring to say nothing to our families that would injure them, but rather studying to give something to them. This is the principle. I notice that some who seem to be exact in their dealings with the world—they would not keep one cent from the world that was due them, and yet, in dealing with themselves and their loved ones, they appear to be very careless—treating them in a wrong way. But in following the Golden Rule, we are becoming more and more like our Heavenly Father. He only does to others what He might wish them to do to Him. No roasting then, nor anything of that kind. Let us keep the Golden Rule in mind, and it will furnish us with the very essence of the teachings of God’s word. First and always, treat others as we would wish to have them do to us, and afterwards do a little more, but NEVER LESS. Love will cause us to do more, even as it did in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. He kept the Golden Rule inviolate in every instance. He never did less than that, but more. He gave His life for others, and that is what all of us are to do. We engaged to do this. This is our covenant. Follow the Golden Rule, and then, do more. We are to give up our lives for our brethren. This is the Bible thought. It is one that should appeal to us even from the human standpoint as being the highest ideal. A young Jew who had come into the knowledge of the truth was explaining how he formerly felt before coming into this knowledge. He was studying music in one of our larger colleges. One evening a rainstorm drove him into one of the meetings of the friends. He was favorably impressed by what he saw and heard. He therefore returned. In time he was more impressed, and subsequently received the truth, and made a full consecration of himself to the Lord. He said, I had been thinking for quite a while before I went into that meeting, before I believed in Christ, before I became a

Bible student, thinking of what I would do with my life. I said, I would like to make some noble use of this life. Various persons came before my mind. For myself, I had tried to keep the law all my life, but I wanted to know how I could make the best and noblest use of the life I had.

This young Jew wanted to know how to make the most of life. He was just the right kind. He thought that some people had done great things, in making money, some were great musicians, etc. He considered those in the world who had been the best pianists, best singers, etc., and reflected, what if I had been some celebrity in music. Oh, I would like to sacrifice my life for something. That is natural. It was to that young man. It is to many until other things become entrenched in their minds. There is a great tendency that way with children at about the age of twelve. It is then that we should give them a helping hand from this viewpoint. They are seeing different things. Without any talking, they are thinking—thinking about great men, great women, what they have done, what they would like to do, etc. They are watching the great ones, and wondering about them. All of these things appear before the child's mind. They learn something about requirements after a thing has taken place. They learn how people use their lives. They think how Jesus did, how the Apostles did, how other great ones have done, and they become desirous of doing some great thing—be a great millionaire, or what not, or they would like to sacrifice their lives for some noble object, just as this young Jew did. All of us who have become leaders of the people—we not only have had these things come before our minds, but we have made them our object—the same as did this young Jew. We have found the right thing—to sacrifice our lives for some noble object. All of us who have had this ideal, and made full consecration of ourselves to the Lord, should never forget this. Let us progress along this way of sacrificing our lives for the truth in following in the footsteps of Jesus. As we progress, we will learn better what God wishes of us. We said we would give up all to the Lord. We did not know all that it meant when we gave our hearts to the Lord. Many things were hidden from the eyes of our understanding, but as we have gone on step by step, the Lord casts upon our pathway the information that we must suffer with Him. But even though we may have learned that it is our privilege to sacrifice our lives for Him, yet, the greatest thing to learn is what He will do for us. God is doing most of it, after all. We are not to do it all. God is the one who is doing the really great things. Our hearts are stirred by His precious promises. We feed upon them and meditate upon them. We are enamored of the things that eyes have not seen nor ears heard. Thus we grow stronger, taller, and become heavier in weight as Christians, day by day and hour by hour. With our desire to grow ever increasing, we see the necessity for our meetings together, for our building each other up in the most holy faith. We see things more clearly. Other things pass away from our vision. We get better and clearer views of things as we continue to grow. And thus it is in regard to these great principles of love and justice and their bearing upon our lives in every respect. As we advance in knowledge, they become clearer and clearer to us.

This same principle will operate in the millennial age. The Lord Jesus will operate with these persons as they are. They will come forth as they are. Justice will not turn

them over to Him perfect, but as they went down. The lower down they were, the more steps they will be required to take to climb up. All the assistance necessary to enable them to climb will be given them under Messiah's kingdom. Thus some will have more to overcome than others. Confucius, for instance, will come forth in the millennial kingdom, and will be a towering giant among the people in that day. The people will then see a heathen man who lived without our opportunities, who heard no church bells, attended no church, etc., and they will be surprised at what a strong character he will be. They will say, as they behold him, if we had only availed ourselves of the privileges and opportunities we had beforehand, we might have had a place among the glorified in heaven, and yet, when they consider themselves in the light of their past experiences, they will conclude they are in their right position, and stimulated by the example of Confucius, et al., and encouraged by the assistances of that time, will be encouraged to progress as fast as possible. Jesus said, it will be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the people of Bethsaida and Capernaum, because the former had had less opportunities than the latter. These latter ones will come forth more tainted in their minds, their characters weaker, and somewhat less inclined to hearken and obey, whereas those who had not heard the message of God's love, it will be new to them and they will be all the more inclined to give heed. It will be more tolerable for them than for the others. It will be a tolerable time for all, but more so for those who have never heard and who have never known.

Coming down then, dear friends, and putting these into practice in our own lives, let me suggest that, from the time that we have made our consecration, and have learned that God justifies us freely from all sin through our Lord Jesus Christ, we note that there is a tendency among the Lord's people, some in one direction, and others in another, to violate, unintentionally, these fundamental principles of justice and love as existent in the divine character and manifested in His dealings with His people, and we do not wish while speaking to one class to have the other misapprehend what we say.

There are some, who, by the natural condition of the brain and organs of the brain, have little self-esteem, and so are easily discouraged, and consequently need encouragement. They find themselves imperfect, and whenever they would do good, evil is present with them. We cannot do the things that we would. Now, some of them have small self-esteem and are likely to become discouraged. When opportunities for service are offered, they are inclined to the thought—others can, but I can't; I feel so weak and unworthy; I don't seem to be able to do anything right. These need to be encouraged and to be assured that God knows their endeavors in doing the best they know how, and He will not exact any more than they are able to do.

There are others who have plenty of self-esteem, and they are inclined to say—Now God won't expect too much of me, He won't expect too much of me because of the conditions of myself from birth—and those content themselves with doing less than their best. Christ died for their sins, they say, and God's grace is very wonderful, and I want to lead a good, pure life, and do what I can, but they do not live up to the highest standard.

Remember, the Lord is going to judge His people, and will do so according to what

He knows about their ability. Mercy will be granted for every imperfection that is unintentional, but no mercy will be extended toward those things we could avoid. Whatever ability we possess, we are responsible for, and God is going to hold us responsible for not doing the best we could with what we have, so that there is some danger of not attaining to the best He has to give. Those who are living up to their opportunities and privileges should go on with courage, doing the best they can with what they have, exercising full faith, and having full confidence in the Lord, for He has promised a sufficiency of grace to cover every imperfection. We may thus receive a blessing. But there must be no excuse for anyone to be careless in living in neglect of his duties and responsibilities. God is not mocked. He that doeth righteousness is righteous. Be not deceived. We are all imperfect in the flesh, but the New Creature is the one who will be held responsible for not doing his best. It is the new creature who is careless respecting his conduct, indifferent to the requirements of the golden rule, and the additional exercise of love—it is he who will be held responsible and will not receive the “Well done; good and faithful servant,” unless he should exercise greater care respecting these important matters. God will have none in that special class who will not measure up to the standard of their full requirement. If we are to be judges of the world, we must be in a condition to be just judges. Therefore, we must pass through this schooling. Do the best you are capable of, is what He expects of you and me—nothing more, but THAT!

Let us rejoice in the wonderful provisions of divine grace, sufficient in supply for our every need, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and let us feed upon His promises, while we follow His providences, and DO OUR BEST. Let us rejoice and follow the Lord, and follow the Lamb.