

But to say that God desired or willed that he should be put to death at "the hands of wicked men" and "murderers," is slanderous and blasphemous against God. It is contrary of every principle of reason and of justice, and no correct system of biblical interpretation requires any such conclusion.

But man, in his alienation and departure from God and his law, must be *drawn back* and *bound back* to God, or evil and ruin must be his inevitable portion, and the final result.

But God has no physical law that is capable of drawing the soul back into union and harmony with himself. Force and gravity will hold a planet in its orbit; but no such power can cause a soul to love God or his fellow men.

Fear entered largely into motives to obedience under the formal and political religion of Judaism; but "fear hath torment and terror," and could, therefore, never give peace and joy to the soul, nor be a perfect law, or principle of action for the human heart.

Love is the only power in heaven or earth that could ever do it.

When you come to understand the philosophy and power of this law in the spiritual realm, you will see that from love flows all that is good. From love comes all spiritual life, and from love comes all spiritual heat and warmth. Peter, therefore, exhorts us to "have fervent love among yourselves," and that we should "love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Love and heat and life are correlative terms, while their opposites are selfishness and cold and death; for I need hardly say that heat is the true symbol and natural property of life, and cold of death. So that it is philosophically true that there can be no spiritual life or warmth without love. And as "love is of God, and God is love," John only states a spiritual truism when he says that "whosoever loveth is begotten of God," while "he that loveth not, knoweth not God." But men had ceased to practice this golden law, as a universal principle of action, and law of the heart; and had, therefore, become spiritually cold, and spiritually dead.

The moral condition of the world, in which the practice of selfishness, had produced strife and anger and wrath and hatred, and evil speaking and lying, and covetousness and theft, and war and murder, till the earth was filled with "violence, cruelty and blood," and "man's inhumanity to man" made countless millions mourn, is ample proof that "the world by nature knew not God," nor the moral attributes of God, nor the spiritual law of heaven. It was necessary, therefore, that the sin of the world should be taken away, or healed. But no man could ascend up into the spiritual world, and return again in order to ascertain, and

then communicate these facts unto men. No disembodied spirit or angel could come and communicate these practical truths, so as to prove and demonstrate their entire reliability and practicability for men in the weakness and temptations of the flesh. I might say, in passing, that every claim that

spirits are now communicating these spiritual truths to men, by itinerating charlatans and frauds so far as I have been able to see or learn, has borne upon its face the palpable impress of venality and of fraud, and of a gross and ridiculous imposition. I regard it, as an insult to the intelligence of the people, or else it is intended as an egregious and hideous joke, to call the tricks of the travelling showman, spiritualism; or the legerdemain tricks of the juggling prestidigitator, the communications of spirits. It is enough to say that no God or man, of either justice or wisdom, will ever hold any man responsible for treating with silent contempt all those exhibitions of jugglery, that are only to be seen in darkened rooms or cabinets, at from 50 cts. to \$5 a head.

But returning to our line of thought we proceed to say that it is a universal law of God, that like only can produce like; and as "love is the only coin for love," love in the heart of man, as an abiding rule and principle of life, could only be produced or begotten by a tangible manifestation of the love of God toward man.

It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that the truth and love of God, should become flesh and dwell among us, so that we could "see with our eyes, and look upon, and handle with our hands," this messenger from heaven; and in his very humanity we could see that his principles of human action were applicable, were reliable and worthy of all acceptance. And now if it was necessary for a spirit messenger to come from heaven to teach men the way, the truth and the life; and it was also necessary that like us he should become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and that to demonstrate their worthiness and reliability, he should receive a prepared body, that he might be tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin; I say if it was thus necessary that a spirit messenger from heaven should take upon himself the form of a man, will you please tell me how human wisdom or infinite wisdom could have consummated the incarnation, in any other possible way, than that in which Jesus Christ was born?

Human wisdom can suggest no better way, and no other way; therefore, I am sure that was the only way.

I think that I have now said enough to show that the great work and mission of Christ was to teach man the simple, yet wonderfully powerful law, that constitutes

the peace, the harmony and the happiness of heaven. This law of love will tie and bind men back into spiritual union and harmony with God and with his fellow men; and this is the glorious purpose and the blessed results of the religion of Jesus the Christ.

The motive that prompted the great gift, and the sacrificial mission of Christ, was nothing but love; "for God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." The proclamation of these facts, and the reception of this law of love into good and honest hearts, is the Gospel of Christ, the power of God, unto salvation.

And I am ready to say now that all the conditions and requirements of this Gospel, are for the one purpose of driving selfishness and evil from our hearts, and filling them with all that is good, by implanting upon our minds and hearts, this holy and heavenly law of love. Our faith, our confession, our repentance, our baptism, our prayers; and all our church relations, are for the one only purpose of changing our nature and selfish hearts, into the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, and thus bringing us into union and harmony with God. If our faith has not been of that sort that "works in us love and purifies the heart," we might just as well believe in Mahomet, or in the man in the moon; "for though we have all faith, so that we could remove mountains and have not love, we are but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Under Moses to "fear God and keep his commandments, was the whole duty of man." But in Christ "perfect love casteth out all fear," and "love is the fulfillment and end of all such law." Paul "marveled," and those who know what Christianity is, still wonder that the world has turned away "from the simplicity of the Gospel." But Christ has forewarned us that the world would "stumble at this stumbling stone," "but blessed is the man that shall not be offended, or stumble at me." I think I have now clearly set before your minds, that true religion has for its purpose the one object of bringing man back into spiritual union and harmony with God. And for this great spiritual work, no intelligent mind will deny, that wisdom will use and only use, just such means and agencies as are naturally adapted to this one purpose. The physical laws of nature, and the spiritual laws of the God of nature are identical in this respect. The means are adapted to the end, and the end cannot be obtained without those very means. All ground does not require the same amount of labor; neither will all ground yield the same increase; yet it is true that all ground must be, or be put in a proper state of preparation; then the seed is required; while

the genial influences for germination and development, are indispensably necessary. If I was to define agriculture or farming, and tell you what it really is, I would say in a word that it included everything, from the good ground, and the labor, and the seed, and the sowing, and the sunshine and the rains, and the waiting, and the patience, and the harvest, and even the use and enjoyment of that harvest. So I might run through with every analogous illustration of nature as set forth in the parables of Christ. And so if you ask me what the Christian religion is, I would answer that it embraces every thing that was absolutely necessary, and which God has brought into requisition, in order to bring the spirits of man back into union and harmony with God; and then to tie, or "anchor" them there. All digging and plowing is not farming; neither will all digging and plowing, produce a good crop. This is equally true of the sowing, and the waiting and the praying, for the seed may be nothing but tares. So it is equally true that all faith in Christ, cannot result in the salvation of the Gospel, for though we may have all faith, and the most perfect obedience to bodily or fleshly commandments; and if they have not produced in us love and the spirit of Christ, we are none of his, and know nothing of the religion of Christ.

I think that you will now understand that true religion has reference to the means and philosophy of man's return and spiritual union with God. That while nature is the great field of physical science, and embraces the methods and true philosophy of the operations of God's physical laws upon material things; true religion embraces the methods and true philosophy of the operations of God's great spiritual law, upon the spirits and hearts of men.

To explain and to understand what true religion and true science really are, is to demonstrate that there is and can be no conflict whatever between them. It is to understand that one pertains to the physical laws of God that govern matter, while the other pertains to the spiritual law of God, that controls the spirit. So that from the human side, all of the teachings of Christ and of his apostles, was for the purpose of developing character, to develop the highest and noblest exhibitions of true manhood and womanhood. While from the divine and spiritual side, the Christian religion is intended to fill the soul of man with such pure and holy principles of moral and spiritual action, as will fill us with joy and peace and righteousness, and bring us into such union and harmony with God, as will be identical with godliness and eternal life.

But of all the blessed and happy results of that union and communion with God, both in this world