



## Preface

**R**EPEATED and insistent demands for a new volume of evangelistic sermons have been coming to me from pastors, evangelists and publishers. I have felt the force of these demands and at last am yielding to them in publishing this new volume of sermons.

These sermons were, for the most part, preached to my own congregation in Los Angeles in the past few months, and God, in His wondrous condescension, has seen fit to bless them to the conversion of a good many persons, the great majority of whom have been men from the ages of twenty-five up to fifty; but there have been some men of riper years converted, even up to seventy or eighty years of age. There have also been some notable conversions among women. We have been greatly interested in the number of Jews and Roman Catholics who have recently made a public profession of accepting Christ in our after-meetings, many of whom have afterwards united with our church, the Church of the Open Door. Not a few of those converted were formerly sceptics, agnostics, infidels and atheists, and quite a number of "Christian Scientists."

The Gospel presented in these sermons is the same Gospel of a crucified Christ, a Saviour from the guilt of sin, and a risen Christ, a Saviour from the present power of sin, that we have been preaching throughout our entire ministry as pastor, and as evangelist in all parts of the world. We are certainly living in a New Day. The War and its after-results have worked a radical transformation in the ethical and religious as well as social and economic outlook of the minds of the men and women of the present day; nevertheless, we find that the same Gospel that was "the power of God unto salvation" before the War, and from the days of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 1: 16), is the Gospel that men will listen to and yield to today. All of these new gospels, "The Social Gospel" with the rest, are proving utterly ineffective in saving individual men or in lifting up communities. The Real Gospel, when preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, produces the same effects in individual lives today, and in the transformation of families and communities, that it has produced throughout all the centuries since our Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross of Calvary and rose again and ascended to the right hand of the Father and poured out His Holy Spirit upon His people. Practical results prove that that Gospel does not even need to be restated, though of course it is desirable to adapt the illustrations and method of argument to the thinking of our own day.

There seems to be a great religious awakening in Scotland and in some parts of Ireland and England, and there are indications here and there of an awakening in our own land. It cannot be denied that many pastors who are

thoroughly evangelical and many of our most intelligent laymen are tired of some of the methods of evangelism that have been in vogue in our own country during the past few years; but this does not mean for one moment that they do not believe in evangelism or in true revivals. We seem to be ripe for a revival now, and it is hoped these sermons may prove helpful in promoting that greatly longed for and earnestly prayed for genuine revival. It is hoped that they may be helpful to pastors in their desire to become their own evangelists, that they may be helpful to those evangelists whom God has chosen, and that they may be directly used to the salvation of many souls, by being put in the hands of men, women and children who are unsaved and need a Saviour. It has been a great joy to the author of this book to receive letters from different parts of the world, from all classes of people, saying that they had been led to Christ through reading printed reports of his sermons.

In our own church, we have found that it has not been necessary to introduce movies, or other sensational features, to draw the crowds. We have never had a movie, or anything of that kind in our church, and never expect to have; and yet our Sunday evening audiences at which these sermons were preached were probably larger than those of any other church in the community, even those resorting to the movies as a means of drawing a crowd; in fact, we think there is no other building used for religious services in the city that would hold the thousands of people who Sunday night after Sunday night have listened to these sermons. What the great attraction is to bring men and women to the house of God, as well as to bring them to a better life, is stated in the fifth sermon in this book.

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## THE KEY-NOTE OF THE BIBLE

*“God is love”*—1 JOHN 4:8.

OUR subject is, “The Key-note of the Bible.” You will find the key-note of the Bible in my text. You will find the text in 1 John 4:8, “God is love.” That is one of the shortest sentences ever written, and it is certainly one of the greatest and profoundest. It is inexhaustible in its meaning and in its scope. Men have been studying, scrutinizing, pondering, and digging into that sentence through the eighteen centuries that have passed since it was written, and they have not exhausted it yet. Thousands upon thousands of sermons have been preached upon that text, yet something new awaits every preacher who studies it and seeks to expound it. Thousands of volumes have been written by some of the world’s greatest thinkers, devoted to the study, exposition, and application of that sentence, but it is as fresh and full as ever, and it is constantly yielding new treasures to each new century, and to each new explorer of its exhaustless wealth. Men and angels will ponder that sentence throughout the endless ages of eternity and not exhaust it.

The Book that contains that matchless sentence bears the unmistakable seal of having God for its Author. The golden truth of priceless worth contained in this sentence is peculiar to the Bible. All the philosophers in the world never discovered that stupendous truth until God revealed it and the Bible declared it. The world would never have known that “God is love,” had not God revealed the fact in His own Word. It is true that there are evidences of beneficent design in nature and in history, but nature and history have both been marred by Satan’s work and by the entrance of Sin into the world, and it is only that interpretation of history and that insight into the future of man and nature and Satan that the Bible gives that enables us to see love reigning above all and through all. We hear much in these days of the profound truths contained in the teachings of the world’s great philosophers of ancient and of modern times, in philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Isocrates, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and in the teachings of the great founders of religions like Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius and Zoroaster; but in none of them do we find this great truth that “God is Love,” nor anything akin to it, not until the Bible revealed it. We owe this truth wholly and solely to the Bible. We must go then to the Bible for the interpretation of this truth.

This sentence is the key-note of the entire Bible. It is the great fundamental thought of the Bible. If any one were to ask me to put into one sentence what the Bible teaches, I could do it. And this would be the sentence,

“God is love.” From start to finish, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, the Bible is one great, ever swelling anthem and the theme of that anthem is, “God is love.” God’s love is the key-note of the whole Bible, of each one of the sixty-six books that go to make up the completed whole. It was the love of God that led to the Creation as described in the first chapter of Genesis,. It was God’s love that led to the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden when they fell as recorded in the third chapter of Genesis. It was God’s love that led to the promise of the Saviour, the seed of the woman, immediately after Adam and Eve had fallen. It was God’s love that led to the call of Abraham and Jacob to be a blessing first to their own descendants and ultimately to the whole human race. It was God’s love that led to the bondage of Israel in Egypt and to their deliverance from that bondage when the time was ripe. It was God’s love that led to the giving of the Law through Moses on Sinai, and it was God’s love that led to the extermination of the Canaanites.

It was God’s love that led to the planting of Israel in that land so wondrously adapted by its natural configuration and by its location in the then inhabited world to be the training-place of the nation that should bring blessing to the whole earth, and from which the Saviour should be born. It was God’s love that shaped Israel’s history through all their wanderings from Him. It was God’s love that at last rooted Israel out of “the land” He had given them and scattered them through the earth. It will be God’s love that restores them again to “the land” that belongs to them by eternal covenant, when the time is full. It was God’s love that sent Jesus Christ to die for sinful men, to rise again from the dead, and to ascend to the right hand of the Father in the glory. And it will be God’s love that will send Him back again to earth when the fulness of time for that greatest event in all this earth’s history has come. Heaven and all its glories, Hell and all its horrors both have their origin in the love of God. Yes, “God is love,” is the key-note of the Bible, the secret of history, the explanation of nature and the solution of eternity’s mysteries.

I wish to call your attention to some of the ways in which the love of God is manifested. Of course, it would take many sermons to recount all the manifestations of the love of God, but we can look at some of them though it would take all eternity to fully understand and appreciate even them.

#### I. GOD’S LOVE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN HIS MINISTERING TO OUR NEEDS AND JOY.

In the first place, *God’s love manifests itself in His ministering to all our needs and to our fullest joy.* This comes out again and again in the Bible,

e.g., our Lord Jesus in expounding to His disciples their own duty, says, in Matthew 5:44, 45, “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; *That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven:* for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” And way back in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 32:9-12, we read, “For Jehovah’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, in the waste howling wilderness; he compassed him about, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, that fluttereth over her young, he spread abroad his wings, he took them, he bore them on his pinions. Jehovah alone did lead him, and there was no foreign God with him.”

This is a marvelous picture of the wondrous love of God that we cannot stop to go into in detail. Every blessing of life is a love token from God. As the Holy Spirit puts it through the Apostle James in James 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.” When the sun shines with its warmth and light and gladness, lift up your head with joy and say, “This is a token of my Father’s love.” When you look upon the blossoming flowers, the growing grass, the budding trees in their spring beauty, say, “All this beauty with which God adorns the earth, this is another token of God’s love to me.” When you feel health and strength coursing through your veins, look up and thank God again for this another token of His love. The countless blessings that come to us all every day of our lives, most of them unnoticed in our blindness and ingratitude, are all tokens of His great and constant love.

## II. GOD’S LOVE IS MANIFESTED IN CHASTENING US WHEN WE FORGET HIM, AND WANDER FROM HIM, AND FALL INTO SIN.

In the second place, *God’s love to His children, yes, to those also who are not yet His children, is manifested in His chastening us when we forget Him, and wander from Him and fall into sin.* This comes out very clearly in that beautiful passage, Hebrews 12:6-10, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.” Here we see that God’s love manifests itself in chastening us and in sending us

trial and pain and bereavement and sorrow. Many cannot see in their many and great afflictions any proof of God's love. It seems to them that God does not love them to allow them to suffer such awful and sometimes such appalling griefs and trials, but they who so think are very blind. Do we not chasten our own beloved children? Do we not do it because we love them and for their good? It would oftentimes be far easier for us not to do it. It would spare our feelings, for we suffer far more than they do when we punish them, if we are true parents. Some parents are so unloving and so self-centered that they allow their children to go unpunished in their folly and sin in order to spare their own feelings. But not so our Heavenly Father. He really loves us, wisely loves us, and so chastens us for our highest good, and sometimes when our conduct makes it necessary, very severely chastises us, or as the Bible puts it, "*scourges*" us. Every wise man thanks God for His chastening love, even in its severest manifestations.

For twelve years or more God spared my wife and me and our family in our home life from serious sickness. We had gone through epidemics of many kinds unscathed. When threatened with croup, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and diphtheria and other diseases, we had cried to God and He had given deliverance again and again. But a day came when God permitted diphtheria to enter our home, and a few short hours after the real character of the disease was discovered to take away from us a beautiful child and to take her away when we thought all danger of death was past. It was a stunning blow, just twenty-four years ago this week, and March 17th never comes round without our thinking of it. For the first time the family circle was broken. The body of our child had been carried from our happy home and laid away in the lonely cemetery. Why did God permit it? Because He loved us. We needed it.

The following Sunday night I spoke on Hebrews 12:6: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." This chastisement, yes this scourging, led to deep heart searchings and discovery of failure and thereby led to confession of sin. It led also to new consecration and love for souls and devotion to God. It brought the answer to prayers that had been ascending to Him for years. It was one of the things that led to my leaving Chicago a few years later to enter upon a world-wide ministry. If God had not in His infinite wisdom and love taken our greatly beloved child, our rarely beautiful and gifted child from us, I think I would never have seen China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, India, and the marvelous work of God in these countries, and the great work of God that followed in England, Ireland, Wales, Germany and many other places. God's judgments are "unsearchable," "his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33) but they are always wise and loving, though we for the time

cannot understand how. All of God's seemingly severe dealings with us came from the wise and wondrous love of God, and we both saw it and praised Him. There is no kinder manifestation of the love of God than His chastening us when we forget Him or wander from Him or become immersed in the world.

One beautiful spring day years ago a friend of mine in Ohio asked me to take a drive with him. We drove out into the country to a quiet cemetery. We entered and went to a remote corner of the cemetery and there found side by side three graves, one the grave of an adult, and the other two of children. They were the graves of that man's wife and his two little girls, all the family he had at the time in the world, with the exception of one little boy. We knelt beside the graves in prayer. As we drove back to town that man said to me, "Brother Torrey, I pity the man whom God has not chastened."

What did he mean? He meant this: He had been a man of the world, an honourable, highly respected man, but a thoroughgoing worldling. Diphtheria came into *his* home. It took one of his little daughters. As she lay in her casket the father knelt beside it and promised God that he would become a Christian. But when the first bitterness of the sorrow had passed he forgot his vow. Again sickness and death entered his home. This time the second daughter died. Beside her coffin he renewed his vow, and kept it. He came to know the joy that every true Christian knows, to have the glorious hope for eternity that only the Christian has. He became, I think, take it all in all, the most active and efficient Christian in the community, and it all came from God's chastening love. He told me again and again that his favourite text of Scripture was, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Ah, friends, if some affliction has come upon you see in it a token of God's love and learn the sweet lessons He would teach by this sorrow.

### III. THE LOVE OF GOD IS MANIFESTED BY HIS SYMPATHIZING WITH US IN ALL OUR AFFLICTIONS.

In the third place, *God's love is manifested in His sympathizing with us in all our afflictions*. This comes out very clearly in a wonderful verse in the Old Testament (Isa. 63:9), "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." While God in His wise love to us chastens us, yes, even scourges us, when we forget Him and wander into sin and worldliness, nevertheless He deeply sympathizes with us in every sorrow, and trial, and heartache that our sin brings upon us. "In all our affliction he is afflicted." It may be His own hand that sends the affliction, as it was in the passage just read; we need the

affliction, it does us good, so He sends it; but He suffers with us in it. GOD IS THE ONE GREAT SYMPATHIZER, "In all (our) afflictions he is afflicted." In our own sorrow, we had many, very many sympathizing human friends, and letters and telegrams of heartfelt sympathy poured in upon us. But no one sympathized with us so fully, so tenderly, so deeply, so intelligently as God Himself. He saw what no human eye could see and entered into it all. And there were very many tender little ministries of His in those days of profound sorrow and many wondrous great ministries also. No human being will ever know what Mrs. Torrey and I passed through the night following the burial of our little child, and the next morning. The waters were deep. It seemed as if they would go over our heads, but One walked beside us. It was God. He suffered with us. He kept His Word: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2).

Friends, some of you are in deep sorrow, some in sorrow of one kind and some in sorrow of an entirely different kind, but I want to tell you, one and all, that God sympathizes with you all in your sorrow whatever it may be. It may seem to you that no one sympathizes with you, that no one even understands, that no one cares, and that may be true of men, but it is not true of God. He understands it all and enters into it all. "Our Father cares."

A woman came to see me at the hotel where I was stopping in Bendigo, Australia. She told me that an awful sorrow had come into her life, but that she could not tell it to any one there, for they all knew her; but I was a stranger and would soon leave the place, and her burden was so heavy she felt that she must have the sympathy of someone and so she had come to me. It was a terrible story that she told me. She was passing through one of the greatest sorrows that ever overtakes any true woman and her heart was nearly crushed. When she had finished that sad story she said to me, "I feel better now that there is someone who knows my sorrow and can sympathize with me." I said to her, "I do indeed sympathize with you. I am glad you came and told me the story that I might help you bear your burden. But," I added, "there is One who has known all about it from the beginning. God has known all about it and He has sympathized with you all the time." Oh, it is true, not a sorrow, not a heartache, not a disappointment, not a calamity, not a grief, ever comes to us but our Heavenly Father knows it all, knows it in all its details, and sympathizes with us in all the suffering and He Himself suffers far more than we suffer.

IV. GOD'S LOVE IS MANIFESTED IN HIS NEVER FORGETTING THOSE WHOM HE LOVES.

In the fourth place, *God's love is manifested in His never forgetting those whom He loves.* This He Himself tells us in the wonderful words in Isaiah 49:15, 16: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." God sometimes seems to forget, but He never does. We cry and no answer comes. The heavens seem to be as brass above our heads but God has not forgotten. HE NEVER FORGETS. A mother may forget her child, though that is not likely, yet she may, but God has said, "Yet will not I forget thee." He has said furthermore, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

#### V. GOD'S LOVE IS MANIFESTED IN HIS FORGIVING OUR SINS.

In the fifth place, *God's love is manifested in His forgiving our sins.* Hezekiah cried unto the Lord: "Behold, it was for my peace that I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. 38:17). God stands ready in His love to pardon the sins of the vilest sinner. There are two things and only two which in His love He demands as a condition of that pardon. They are, first, that we forsake our sins; second, that we turn to Him in faith and surrender to His will. Listen to His own word: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). God will not pardon our sins if we hold on to them. There is a theory regarding God's love current in the world today that has no warrant in the Word of God, namely, that, because "God is love" He will pardon and save all men whether they repent and believe on Jesus Christ or not.

This theory is wholly and utterly unscriptural. To believe it you must give up the Bible. But if you give up the Bible you must give up your belief that "God is love," for it is from the Bible and from the Bible alone that we learn that "God is love." There is absolutely no other proof that "God is love," than that the Bible says so. That is proof enough, for the Bible can be easily proven to be the Word of God. But if you give up the Bible and are logical you must give up your belief that "God is love"; for when the Bible is gone the belief that "God is love" has no foundation of any kind. But if you retain the Bible you cannot believe that God will pardon and save all men whether they repent or not. The most illogical system in the world (except Unitarianism) is Universalism. It starts out with the Bible statement that "God is love" as its foundation stone. Then it goes to work to discredit the Bible by rejecting other plain statements in it, statements about Hell,

and the future state of those who reject Christ, and by doing that it undermines the authority of the Bible, and thus undermines the foundation of our faith that “God is love.” In other words, it tries to build up a superstructure by undermining its foundation. Give up the Bible and there is no proof that “God is love,” and so Universalism goes by the board. Believe in the Bible and you must believe in Hell, and so Universalism goes by the board. Take either horn of the dilemma you please and Universalism has absolutely no foundation. The very love of God, God’s love to the righteous and His love to His Son Jesus Christ, demands that if men persist in sin and persist in the rejection of His Son Jesus Christ, that they be separated from the righteous and punished. THE LOVE OF GOD MAKES HELL A NECESSITY IF MEN PERSIST IN SIN. And, if they persist eternally in sin, it makes eternal Hell a necessity. And it is psychologically certain, as well as clearly revealed in the Bible, that if men persist in sin beyond a certain point they will persist in sin eternally.

But if the vilest sinner repents, God will pardon. He says so. He goes so far as to say in Isaiah 1:18: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” A man once said to me, “My sins are too great for God to pardon.” I answered, “I do not wish you to think that your sins are any less than you now think they are, no doubt they are even greater than you think, but I want you to see that, great as your sins are, God’s pardoning love is greater still.” How often God proved this in the Bible. David’s sin was great, it was monstrous, he was an adulterer and a murderer; yet God pardoned him. Manasseh’s sin was exceeding great, he hated God and he hated God’s people, and he made the streets of Jerusalem to run with the blood of God’s servants, yet God pardoned him (2 Kings 24:3, 4; cf. 2 Chron. 33:1-13). Saul of Tarsus was a great sinner, he hated Jesus Christ, he persecuted the disciples of Jesus Christ and took part in their murder, he was a bold blasphemer and compelled others to blaspheme; yet God pardoned him. So down through the centuries many of the vilest sinners this world has ever seen have repented, and God has pardoned them. There sit in this building tonight men and women who have gone down into the deepest depths of sin but God has pardoned and saved them, and they sit here tonight rejoicing in His pardoning love, knowing that their every sin is blotted out, and furthermore, they have been transformed by the power of His grace.

#### VI. GOD’S LOVE WAS MANIFESTED IN HIS GIVING HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON TO DIE FOR US.

In the sixth place, *God’s love was manifested in His giving His only be-*

*gotten Son to die in our place.* As the Spirit of God puts it in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And again we read in Romans 8:32 “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;” and we read in 1 John 4:10: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” And away back in the prophetic vision of the Old Testament, seven hundred years before the Saviour was born, we read: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath made to strike on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). This manifestation of God’s love is greatest of all. This manifestation of God’s love is stupendous, it seems past believing but we know it is true. God made the greatest sacrifice in His power for our good. He made the greatest sacrifice in the world’s history, He “GAVE UP “that which was dearest to Him, HIS OWN SON.

No earthly son was ever so dear to his father as Jesus Christ was dear to God. I have a son, an only son, and I love him, but my love for my boy is but the faintest adumbration of God’s love to Jesus Christ. And yet God gave that only begotten Son, that eternally beloved Son, up for you and me. Gave Him up to die. To die an awful death, an appalling death. Gave Him up to be crushed by the weight of man’s sin and guilt. And for what purpose did He give Him up? “That whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.” God has done everything in His power to provide everlasting life for each one of us. If we do not have it, it is our own fault. God has exhausted the resources of infinite wisdom and infinite love and infinite power to provide everlasting life for you and me, and you and I can have it for the taking.

Such is the love of God, very inadequately described. But I wish to ask a question in closing. The question is this: WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THAT WONDROUS LOVE OF GOD TONIGHT? Our guilt never looks so black as when seen in the dazzling light of God’s amazing love. To be a sinful man or woman seems bad enough, to despise and break God’s holy and excellent laws seems bad enough, but the worst thing about men and women out of Christ, the most shocking thing about men and women out of Christ, the most horrible thing about men and women out of Christ, the most damnable and damning thing about men and women out of Christ is, that *they are trampling under foot the love of God.* What would you think of a man who had a true and loving mother, a mother who had done everything for him, a mother who had made every sacrifice for him, a mother who had impoverished herself and imperilled and wasted her life for him, and then he despised that love, rejected that love, sneered at that love, denied that love, and

sought to discredit that love? Would you not say that that man was a wretch? But no mother's love is so great and wonderful as the love of God to you and me. No mother ever made a sacrifice for her child as great as God has made for you and me. Now what will you do with that love tonight? Will you accept it or despise it? Will you put your trust in it or spurn it? Will you open your heart to it or spit upon it? What will you do with it?

Oh, men and women, are you rejecting Christ? Are you trampling under foot the wondrous love of God revealed by giving His Son to die on Calvary's Cross for you? If you are, what have you to say for yourselves? Oh, give up your awful treatment of this glorious Son of God, and accept Him now, as your personal Saviour, and surrender to Him as your Lord and Master, begin the confession of Him, a confession that most of you should have begun long, long ago, and go out from this place tonight to serve Him all the remainder of your days with all your strength.