

## WITHOUT CHRIST AND WITH CHRIST

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Nearly everyone knows by experience that it is a bad thing physically to allow feelings of anger to rage inside the heart, whether the feelings are directly expressed or not. Impatience and forgetfulness make many people old before their time. Mdme. Modjeska recently said:—

“I cannot afford to get angry. A woman at my time of life must economize her emotions and her nerves if she wants to hold the remnants of her youth and beauty.”

Anger means physical ill, but, worse than that it means also spiritual death. The light was an unnatural one on Stephen’s face, when the council saw it, “as it were the face of an angel,” but his face would not have shown as the face of an angel if he had had one trace of anger and bitterness in his heart toward those who were about to martyr him for his testimony.

“BY *faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” Heb. 11:4.

We have learned that God fulfilled His promise. Jesus, the Lamb of God, really came and was slain and raised again, that guilty man might have a way back to God and all that he had lost.

But Jesus did not come until after Adam and many of his children were dead. Yet every one of them that accepted this “Way” that God provided, and believed God’s promise, and died trusting in the coming Lamb to save them, is safe; for God’s promise was as sure as though it had already been fulfilled. They were cleansed from every sin and will live again with God and angels in Eden, when Jesus comes the second time and calls them from their graves. And the promise is that we, too, may join that happy throng and go *with* them to be with the Lord, if we also accept the Lamb of God for *our* Saviour.

The Lord has told us in the Bible about many of those who died in faith, and also of many who died in unbelief. He has told us of the faithful, that we might be encouraged by their victories; and He has told us of the unbelieving, that we might be warned by their defeats. The closer we study the story of their lives, the better we shall know how to be saved ourselves.

The first ones that God tells us about are Cain and Abel, because they were the first children that Adam and Eve had. Cain was the elder and Abel was the younger.

When Adam was created we read that he was in the image of God,—beautiful, glorious, perfect, partaking of all the goodness and life of God. But he lost all of that by following Satan. And when we read of Adam's children we find that they were in *Adam's* own likeness, and after *his* image,—weak, frail, sinful, partaking of all the evil and dying nature of Adam. You see he could give to his children only what he had himself.

Cain and Abel, therefore, were in as much need of a Saviour as Adam was, and their only hope of salvation was in Jesus, the coming Lamb of God. If they believed in Him, He would cleanse them from every sin, and keep them from sinning day by day, and finally restore them, with all of the believing ones, to Eden and its joys.

Did they accept the "Way" which God, at such great cost, had provided? Did they have faith in the precious blood that was to be shed for them?

We read in the fourth chapter of the Bible that Abel was a keeper of sheep and Cain was a tiller of the ground.

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

Why was Abel's offering accepted and Cain's rejected? Was God partial? Did He love Abel better than Cain?

Oh, no, for we read that the Lord talked with Cain and said, "If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?" He will accept *anyone* who comes to Him by faith in Jesus. In Heb. 11:4 we are told that it was by *faith* that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

Now we see why Cain was not accepted,—he tried to come to God in his own way, in place of in God's way. He did not have faith in the cleansing, saving power of the blood of Christ. He thought that some other way would do just as well as the way God had commanded. But without faith in Jesus all the sacrifices in the world could not do him any good, for there was no other way under heaven whereby he could be saved.

Without the blood of Christ there is no remission (pardon) of sin. But Cain showed his unbelief in the blood of God's Lamb by not bringing

a lamb and offering its blood as his sacrifice. By bringing an offering of the fruit of the ground, without any blood, he showed that he thought he could be saved without Christ's blood. For God had commanded that all who believed in the blood of Christ should bring the blood of a lamb in their offerings.

Abel had faith in Jesus, therefore he was careful to obey Him in every little thing; but Cain did not have faith in Him, therefore he was not careful to obey Him in every little thing. *Your* actions will always show whether you have faith or not. If you really believe God and have faith in His Son you will obey Him. And without faith in Jesus it is impossible to please God, or be accepted, or be saved, no matter what you may do. Why? Because "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Neither is their salvation in any other."

Like all the other brothers who have lived upon the earth, they were of a weak and sinful nature because they partook of the sinful nature of their father Adam.

They were also tempted by Satan, just as brothers and sisters are tempted today. But they did not need to yield to Satan then, any more than you need to yield to Satan now, for God had provided a Way of escape. He had given His only Son that *whosoever* believeth in *Him* should not be overcome by Satan and perish, but should gain the victory over Satan, and have everlasting life. Then, even as now, the words of the Son were, "Without *Me* ye can do *nothing*."

Abel believed this with all his heart, and showed his faith by bringing the offering that God had commanded. But Cain did not believe it. He thought that his own way was just as good as God's way, and that he did not need Christ to save him from the power of Satan. He showed his unbelief by not bringing a lamb, as God had commanded.

We see, then, that Abel chose to live *with* Christ, and Cain chose to get along *without* Christ, for we are told that Christ dwells only in the heart of the one who has faith in Him.

Abel's offering was accepted by the Lord, and Cain's offering was *not* accepted. Of course not, for Christ says, "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," for "I am the Way" and "I am the Door." Since Cain would not consent to use the only way and the only door to God, he should not have expected to reach Him, any more than you should expect to reach a garden if you refuse to use the only entrance to it.

Here was an Almighty Friend, then, for Abel, that Cain could not reach because he was without Christ. And was it not a Friend worth having? “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

And when Cain saw that his brother was accepted and he was not, he was very angry with his brother, and drew his face down until it looked just as yours does when you are very angry; and he said sharp, cruel words to his brother.

The Lord talked with him and tried to show him that he would be accepted as quickly as Abel if he would come in the right way. But Cain refused to accept Christ as Saviour, so he had no way of escape from the temptations of Satan.

“And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him”! Genesis 4:8. And why did He slay him? Had Abel done anything to harm Cain? No, he had not so much as said one unkind word, even when Cain had spoken so cruelly to him.

Then why did Cain kill him? In 1 John 3:12 we are told that it was “because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous”! It was because he had yielded to Satan’s mind instead of to Christ’s mind.

Satan always hates those who have the mind of Christ. And so he puts this same hateful mind into every one who will yield to him. This is why every one who will live godly must suffer persecution.

But remember this: It is better to be *dead with* Christ than to be *alive without* Him; for the one who is alive without Him will soon be dead, and the one who is dead with Him will soon be alive.

Look at the one who is alive *without* Christ, who yields to Satan and allows him to put his own selfish, hateful mind within him—

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that *no murderer hath eternal life* abiding in him” (1 John 3:16); “He that pursueth evil pursueth it *to his own death*” (Prov. 11:19); “The Wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; *into smoke shall they consume away.*” Ps. 37:20.

Diane Sawyer interviewed the sister-in-law of Osama Bin Laden. She has been estranged from one of Bin Laden’s 23 brothers, Yeslam, and is seeking a divorce. For 27 years she put up with abuse—and she wants out! Diane Sawyer asked Carmen Bin Laden, Do you hate Osama Bin Laden? Her response was a classic picture of the Christian response to anger, hatred, and the evil actions of terrorism. She said, Hate him? No I cannot hate Osama Bin Laden. He hates, and look at what he does. I must not hate.

But hear the promises to the one who is dead *with* Christ:—

“Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall *find it*” (Matt. 10:39); “*Blessed* are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, *your reward is great in heaven*” (Luke 6:22, 23); “Be thou faithful unto death, and *I will give thee a crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10); “*Your life is hid with Christ in God*. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Col. 3:4.

Then, never mind, if your family or friends are angry with you for not joining in their disobedience. Be kind and gentle, and walk bravely on with Christ, and though you suffer now, your reward will be *great* by and by.

It is not enough for your father or mother or your brother or sister to have Christ; *you* must have Him for yourself. Abel’s having Christ did not save Cain.

The sixth commandment reads: “Thou shalt not kill.” Ex. 20:18. It is very likely that most of those who read this would be inclined to say: “This have I kept from my youth up.” The number of people who with malice or by force take the life of any fellow-creatures is comparatively small, and therefore then is undoubtedly a feeling among most people that this commandment does not specially concern them. They acknowledge, of course, that it is right, but do not think that they have ever fallen under its condemnation; they are not conscious of ever having had even a desire to kill anybody, and so they assume that so far as they are concerned this commandment need never have been given.

But again we must be reminded of the fact that the commandment is exceeding broad, and that this one is no less broad than all of the commandments. The commandment is spoken to all, and therefore it is necessary for all, for God never speaks in vain. The moment we use a synonym for the word “kill,” we begin to see a little of the breadth of the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” This expression is so common that we scarcely give it a thought; but we may say, Thou shalt not take life, which is the same thing in other words, and we at once get a broader view.

#### **THE ROOT OF MURDER**

Of Christ it was prophesied that He should “magnify the law, and make it honorable.” In the fifth chapter of Matthew we see the law as

magnified by His teachings. He said: "Ye have heard that it was said, by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." Matt. 5:21, 22, R. V. The statement is absolute: every one who is angry with his brother is guilty of murder. Jesus is not disparaging the teaching of old time; He Himself is the Beginning, and He came to make plain that which was taught from the beginning. He did not mean that the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," was incomplete, and that He was giving something better and greater, but He showed the comprehensiveness of it,—that the words, "Thou shalt not kill," mean, Thou shalt not be angry. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and "love is not provoked."

God sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. In every case the sin is not the thing actually done, which one can see, so much as that condition in the individual, that led to the doing of it. So long as the root from which murder grows is in the heart, the individual is counted as a murderer. Folks naturally classify sins into different grades, and in the history of the apostate church sinners have been required to do penance according to the recognized degree of guilt. Some sins were classed as venial, and others as mortal. For some sins the payment of a small sum would provide satisfaction, while others could be expiated only by a vast amount of treasure or works. This is simply the religion of human nature.

Some sins are more unpopular than others; for some sins the sinner is ostracized, while others do not affect one's standing in society, but may even give one admission into what is considered the "best society." But there is no evidence in the Scriptures that the Lord thus grades sin. We have no reason to suppose that He recognizes the distinction made by man, of "murder in the first degree," or "second degree." "Sin is the transgression of the law," and "the wages of sin is death." That comprehends the whole matter.

In this we are not belittling the guilt of murder, but showing where the sin lies. He who has taken the life of another has done an awful thing, yet he is not necessary more guilty than one who has done something not so looked upon by the world. Let us consider the matter of anger: Who has not been angry? Indeed it is often thought that a display of anger is a mark of spirit, and of strength of character, and that he who cannot be provoked to anger is a milksop, and

lacking in ambition. But anger is really brief madness, and to give way to it, the same as to give way to any other passion, is a mark of weakness, and not of strength. How many murders have resulted from quarrels arising over some trifle. Two friends get into a dispute, they are both quick-tempered, and one takes offence at something said by the other; retort is given, the men both lose control of themselves, and blows are exchanged. In their temporary madness a severe blow is struck, and one of them is killed. Then comes the awakening; the man would never have done such a thing if he had known what he was doing, but he was so angry that he did not know what he was about. How many times has this been given as an excuse for something that one has done; and it is true, for a person in this condition is not waster of himself.

In one sense the murder committed under such conditions is an accident; it certainly was not intentional. Yet the man is a murderer, nevertheless. The guilt lies not in the blow that was struck in a moment of unconsciousness, but in that disposition which made the blow possible. How many there are who have been saved from execution only by accident. For let every person who has ever been so angry that he has, even for a moment, lost control of himself, remember this: that in that moment he might have taken a life, and the fact that he might have done so, and that it was only accident or the grace of God that preserved him from the actual deed, shows that he was really guilty of the possible murder. This terrible thought should be taken to heart, and serve as an effectual warning against giving way to passion.

Take the case of the first murder ever committed. We have the secret of it given in 1 John 3:11, 12. "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." You know the story. Cain and Abel each brought an offering to the Lord; Abel was accepted, Cain was rejected. What evil quality is it that is aroused when one finds another preferred before him?—It is jealousy. Cain killed Abel because he was jealous of him. Every jealous feeling is the seed of a murder. Even more than this; as with anger, so with jealousy, it not simply leads to murder, but it is murder. Every one who feels hurt because somebody else is honored and he is passed by; every one who feels sour or morose because he has not been treated with the consideration that he thinks

is his due, has violated the commandment which says, "Thou shalt not kill."

D. L. Moody tells the fable of a pheasant who was envious of another that could fly better than he could. One day this pheasant saw a hunter with a bow and arrow and said to him, "That pheasant flying right above you would provide great food if you could shoot him down." The man said, "Well, I could shoot him down but I have no feathers for my arrows." So the first pheasant pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot but missed his rival. So the envious bird said, "Try again, try again!" and he pulled out another feather and another. After an hour of shooting, the pheasant was out of feathers and said with great indignation, "You worthless hunter, now you have no food because you're such an awful shot." The hunter looked at the featherless pheasant and said, "Who says I have no food?" Envy's greatest victim is the one who envys.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Romans 13:10. "Love seeketh not its own." Love prefers another in honor; but where love is not, there is murder. "We should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother." 1 John 3:10, 11. The commandment is that we love one another, not as Cain, who slew his brother. Here we are told, not what love is, but what it is not. Love is the opposite of the spirit that Cain manifested. Whoever does not obey the law of love, is classed with Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.

This is further shown in the case of Joseph and his brethren: Joseph had received special marks of favor from his father, and because of his high character had been taken more fully into his confidence than his brethren. When they saw him coming to them on an errand of kindness, they said: "Behold, this dreamer cometh; come, let us kill him." Genesis 37:19. They did not actually take his life, but were turned aside from it by Reuben, only as a matter of expediency. In effect, they killed him. They sold him into Egypt, only because they thought that thus they would get rid of him as effectually as by shedding his blood. This was the natural working of envy, for we read: "The Patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt." Acts 7:9. Envy, therefore, which is the sister of jealousy, is also murder. Every one who envies another, because of his goodness or any good fortune, has transgressed the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

History tells of a statue that was erected to celebrate the victory of the Grecian games. It so aroused the envious hatred of the rivals that



one of them sneaked out at night to topple the statue. He found it so heavy he had to put quite an effort into rocking it back and forth. When he finally got it to topple it fell the wrong way and crushed him to death. This is the way of bitter envy.

WE frequently hear this text of Scripture quoted: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10); but few get from the rendering in our common version all the strength that they should. The Hebrew word rendered "restrain" means "to gird," "to bind about," and the word rendered "remainder" means the last portion. The idea therefore is that God takes the utmost limits of human wrath and girds Himself with it. See Revised Version.

So far is He from being troubled by the raging of the heathen, that He takes all the strength of their wrath and binds it about Himself as a girdle. This is the way that He restrains it, and makes it praise Him. He even wears it as clothing. What comfort is there in this for us?—Since God can give glory to Himself out of the raging hate of men, surely He can much more be glorified by our sincere and loving, and even though feeble and blundering, efforts to serve Him.

"Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Eccl. 7:9. Very true. It remains there, constantly springing into activity at every provocation, or no provocation at all. He harbors it in his heart, and cherishes it.

We are glad for the promise that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. We have an advocate; that advocate is Christ. He is now making intercession for us.

The fact that we are represented at court by an advocate does not prove that the judge is unjust, or disinclined to listen to your case; but it does prove that you are unable to properly present your own case. There is nothing in you that would recommend you to God, for you have forfeited all claim upon his mercy. God cannot look upon sin with any allowance. It is exceedingly repugnant to him. When man was pure and innocent he could talk face to face with God; but when he fell, God hid his face from him. A just God could not endure a sinful being in his presence, even to beg for mercy. Therefore we now have to come to God through the intercession of Christ. Christ says: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John 14:6. Christ is the sinner's only hope.

If a you were in danger of drowning and a rope were thrown to you, would you stop to criticize the rope, or the man who threw it. If you

were wise you would seize it at once. You would not cavil, and wonder why those seeking to save you did not use some other means; nor would you hesitate, for fear that the rope would not hold you; neither would you, unless you were blind, say that no rope had been thrown; nor, unless you were insane or hopelessly conceited, would you assert that you could climb into the ship without the aid of any rope. Should you do any of these things, the tide would carry the rope beyond your reach, and you would be left to drown.

So the one who carps at the plan which God has chosen by which to save men, is in danger of losing the benefit of the gift which is held out to him. Perhaps God might have devised some other means of salvation, if it had pleased him to do so, but since he did not, it ill becomes us to question his wisdom.