

The Lord's Day Morning

July 14, 1946

**"The Revealed God"**

**Scripture – Isaiah 45:16-25**

**Text – Isaiah 45:22**

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

### Introduction

1. Men today have come to be very much followers of Kant's pure Reason
  - a. They feel that everything must be approached from a viewpoint of pure reason.
  - b. This means that many have come to reject any revelation.
2. This of course seems to many to strike at the very center of Christianity because Christianity is a revealed religion.
  - a. These who follow reason have come in a large measure to believe that they, to be rational, must reject revelation and follow only reason.
  - b. Let me illustrate if I can this position
    1. Men say I cannot believe in a God who is not this kind of a God or that sort of a Being. They will select certain passages of Scripture and say reason demands the rejection of these things as being an expression of God.
  - c. This viewpoint has appealed to a great many people in this modern day.
    1. They want to be what they would call modern and intellectual in their approach to every subject and approach them all on the same basis. That means then that they will approach religion on same basis they approach any other subject.
    2. Many, in fact, most of them feel they are showing signs of intellect because they cannot on pure reason accept many of the tenets of religion which men for ages have held to as important and fundamental.
3. This has caused many to reject the God of the Bible and has caused consternation among some groups of Christians.
  - a. There are those who have come to the conclusion that old fashioned thinking of God must be surrendered and that we can no longer trust the Bible as an accurate revelation of God.
    1. And since it is not accurate revelation of God, then it cannot be trusted in other respects.
  - b. I regret this movement as much as any
    1. It has turned thousands and I presume millions away from the Bible and them a God which is not able to appeal to their highest and best self. Much of our trouble in the world today is due to our rejection of God as He is revealed in the Scriptures.
  - c. But I am not afraid that God is defeated or that Christianity is to be superseded by some other religion.

1. I know that Stanley Jones is a very brilliant man and that he has a great following among certain religious forces around the world. Some of his books I grant may be fine. There was one, however, which I tried to read, but found I could not do so. That book was, *Christ's Alternative to Communism*. In this book, he took the position that, unless certain things were done and the Church followed such a progress, that Christ and his religion would be eradicated from the earth. I could not follow that premise because I do not believe communism or anything else will ever defeat the cause of Christ in the world.
4. So I am not too afraid that the rationalists and so called intelligentsia of today will rule God out of His world nor will they by their attack defeat God or His purposes in the world.
5. In fact, I am sure one day and, oh, how I hope it will be soon – this group will awaken to the fact that the revealed God is the true God and that any rational intelligent person should and indeed must accept this God as the only kind of God which would be worthy of a man's full confidence and devotion.
6. Let us see if this is not true.

#### I. God of Justice

1. There are those who proclaim to the world that they cannot accept the revelation we have of God because their reason demands a just God and that the Bible reveals God as dealing unjustly.
2. Here is their argument presented as fairly as I know how.
  - a. God made man and put him on earth and that to punish that man by forever banishing him into the punishment of hell would be unjust. Or...
  - b. As one man expressed it – he could not believe that God commanded the Israelites to drive the Canaanites out of the land which they had occupied for those centuries because that would have been unjust.
  - c. Now this appears to be very logical and it would seem to be that these rationalizers had created in their minds a God more just than we have Him revealed to us in the Scriptures.
3. Let us however think a little deeper than that.
  - a. How could a just God allow the Canaanites to continue on their way unpunished? They rejected Him; they worshiped idols. They openly practiced all kinds of immorality; they oppressed and enslaved the surrounding smaller nations. When God promised this land to Abraham, He said it would be over 400 years before they could have it because the iniquity of those inhabitants of Canaan was not yet full.
    1. After all those years, would anyone think God unjust for punishing those people?
  - b. We have had something of a parallel case in the recent history of the world. Many people said during the recent world war that if Germany and Japan should win the war it would certainly shake their faith in the justice of God if not destroy it altogether.
    1. Yet these so-called rationalists of today would reject the Bible revelation of God because He commanded the destruction of a nation

which history records was doing the same sort of thing that Germany and Japan were doing only if possible worse.

c. How from a rational view point alone could one believe in a God who was just and still allow such an idolatrous, sinful nation to go unpunished?

4. Again let us analyze their statement that they cannot believe in a God who would punish sinners.

a. I admit that this, on the very face of it, sounds as though, from a rational viewpoint, one would be justified in rejecting the revelation of God that He would punish the sinful.

b. But when we look deeper we are compelled to ask how could God be just and make no distinction between good and bad, between those who were living righteous lives and those who lived unrighteous lives?

1. Surely pure reason tells us that unless there were some distinction made there would be no moral laws in the world and that as I said last Sunday morning, the whole moral structure of the universe would come tumbling down upon us as a heap of ruins.

5. So reason itself demands that we believe in a God, if we are going to believe in a just God, who is a judge and who will punish sin and iniquity.

a. Rationalists of our modern school reject this conception of God because they demand a just God and yet reason itself – pure reason, if you please – demands that a God of justice makes such a distinction.

6. But they would answer such punishment comes in this world and there is no demand for a belief in an eternal punishment.

a. This is a very popular argument with many today and it certainly has caught thinking of many who would like to destroy any belief in hell.

1. But logically it has its fallacies.

b. First, all we need to do is to look all about us and know that it is not true that the wicked receive their punishment in this world. Most all of us know how or have known those who have lived the worst sort of lives who have gained riches at the expense of their fellowmen and have lived in luxury and ease and at death have received the honors of a populace and as far as we are able to see, have suffered only a minimum or none at all.

c. While, on the other hand, we have known some good people who have consistently lived good lives who have suffered and had a hard time in this life.

d. God has said it would be so, but that in an afterlife they would receive their rewards while the wicked would be punished.

e. So it is of no avail to say that the justice of God is maintained by punishment here on earth.

f. Again, what would we think of a God who permitted men to flaunt Him, His being, and His way of life through life and receive, if they should, a minor punishment for a brief time in this world and then go to dwell through eternity on some basis equal with those who had believed in God and accepted and served Him.

7. No, I tell you that reason is not on the side of the one who denies the Christian God which is revealed to us, claiming they cannot accept Hi because the revelation we have of

Him pictures Him as unjust; rather reason demands that a just God should be such a being as we have revealed to us in the Scriptures.

## II. Merciful God

1. Again, the modern rationalist of the day says they cannot accept the revelation of God we have in the Scripture because they must believe that God is a merciful and a forgiving God and that they are compelled to reject a God who is so merciless that He would punish sin. They cannot again believe in a God who is merciful sending men into an eternal hell.

2. But let us look rather carefully at this proposition set forth by the rationalist who rejects revelation.

3. Would there be any mercy in God if He simply said sin is of such small consequences to me that I will just wipe out any distinction between the one who sins and the one who does not?

4. We must take into consideration that then, although we might have a merciful God, we would have sacrificed every aspect of the holiness of God. For only as God makes a distinction between good and bad can He be holy. And only a holy God can be genuinely merciful. If it makes no difference what one does or how they live then mercy becomes not mercy but simply indifference.

a. Here really is the great difference between the demand of the modern rationalist and the one who holds to the mercy of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Really what the one demands is not so much mercy as it is indifference.

5. We have the revelation of God that He is a holy God and that He cannot be indifferent to sin and lightly pass over it because it is repulsive to His holy nature and is contrary to His holy desires.

a. But because He is a merciful as well as a holy God, that mercy must also assert itself albeit it still maintains His holiness.

b. So this great mercy of God according to our revelation of Him sent His Son the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to pay the penalty for sin and to purchase the redemption from sin for all who would receive it.

c. Here then the mercy of God broke through both the justice and holiness meeting the demands of justice and satisfying the holiness by making man a new creature and so transforming him into what God wants that when He comes into His presence, man will not only have the penalty paid for his sin, but he will be made good.

d. All those who receive Christ, receive the forgiveness of sins and a new heart and nature.

1. This surely is the highest expression of mercy one could ever imagine God having.

2. That His mercy was so great that it not only wanted to forgive but found a way to forgive although at the price of giving His Son.

6. But the rationalist rejects this revelation because they claim the mercy of God is not extended to all but only to those who accept Christ and their reasoning says it should extend to all.

a. What they really demand then is not mercy toward sinner, but indifference toward sin.

- b. What reasoning man would care to have a God who was indifferent toward the conduct and actions of men? That a murderer, thief, liar, and licentiate could and would stand before Him with the same standing as one who respected human life, was honest, moral, truthful, and who loved and endeavored to serve God.
7. So again I say to you that modern rationalism demands God to be merciful and that the revelation of Him we have in the Scriptures makes Him far more merciful than the reason of man demands although it would not make Him indifferent to right and wrong and would still maintain His holiness and justice.

### III. The Love of God

1. Many we look at one other reason the so called modern rationalist gives for rejecting the God of the Bible.

- a. They say that they must believe in a God of love and not a God of hate or in a God who would punish.

- b. Their argument here is pretty much the same as that they present regarding their claim that He must be just and merciful.

- 1. They cannot believe in a God who would punish sin. They must have a God who is so full of love that He would not allow ill to come to anyone.

2. To be more specific they say that they cannot believe in a God who would permit his children to suffer. So they say that God does not have anything to do with the suffering which is in the world – that He is set apart from all such.

- a. This, too, sounds very, very rational and would seem to set God on a much higher pinnacle of love than the revelation of God places Him. I said would seem to. But in truth it does not do so.

- 1. I knew a man once who had come up the hard way. He had lived in boyhood very frugally and had known nothing of the luxuries of life. But by dint of hard work, and good management, he had become a man of some means and he had determined that his children should never know the hardships which had beset his life. His boy went to one of the finest private schools in the South. He attended one of the outstanding universities in the land. He had all that heart could wish; when he graduated from the university he wanted to be an author and so his father secured for him a position on a newspaper and supplemented his salary so he could have more than he could have had. But the paper would not use him at any salary because he did not want to work. His father then secured another position on another paper for him, but the same condition prevailed. The boy said he did not like newspaper work; what he wanted to do was to study and write so his father made it possible for a time for him to try, but he spent his time at doing nothing. He would not work at anything. Finally, the family was going to take an extended trip and asked the boy what he was going to do and he said he was going to a certain city and get a job. The father said all right and the day they were to leave, he said to the boy, “Son you are leaving today, are you not?” and he said, “No, I will not leave for several days.” And his father said, “Well, you will have to get your things and move out of the house because I have notified the insurance people no one will be living here for several weeks and they

have made the necessary adjustments in the policies and I have told the night watchman that no one will be in the house and should he see a light, in the house, or anyone about, he had better investigate or call the police.” That night the boy went to the train to tell the folks goodbye and the father said afterward that he knew he fully expected him to give him quite a sum of money to live on while they were gone. He did everything but ask for it, but the father said he remained adamant, and did not give him one penny or tell him he would go to the place of business and get any. The father knew the boy had some money in the bank to tide him over for a time. I saw the boy a day or two after the family had left and at this time, I knew nothing about the last portion of this story. He was working in a filling station and I said something about his being lonely in that big house by himself and he said, “I am not saying there” and I asked him where he was staying and he said at the Tourist Home up the street from where he was working. Our family was leaving in a day or two on our vacation and I started to tell him to come on over and stay at our house. I was, I admit, just a little bit put out with my friend, but then I decided something was happening I knew nothing about because that was not like my friend, and so I decided that before I did anything, I had better find out more about it and so next morning I went to the place of business and into his partner’s office and asked his advice. He said, “You just leave it alone. I am going to see about the whole thing” and then told me a portion of the story. He said the next morning after the family had left the boy came seeking work and he told him all he could give him to do was greasing cars and waiting on the trade at a filling station. He said he expected him to tell him he was going to be an author and would take no such work, but instead he said he took the job and seemed glad to get it.

Now some people would say the father did not love the boy, but that father told me that one of the most miserable times in his life was when he boarded that train and as it pulled out, he saw his son standing there so forlorn and hurt. He suffered, how he suffered, but I believe he expressed his love for that son by being willing to make the son to suffer and thereby suffering with him because it was only by such drastic means that he could help the boy. That boy became a good businessman. Served his country during the war and is now at work again in the fine position and has a fine family.

God loves His children and allows – or even at times – may cause them to suffer, but always suffers with them, that He may save them and make them useful servants of His.

Let us look, too, more closely at the demand of these rationalists for a God who is a God of love and would not punish.

The revelation of God is that He so loved that He gave His only begotten Son. It is that God sent His Son to die in order to save man; but the cry of the rationalist is for a God of love yet they reject the love of God which suffered so that men might be saved. Could there be any greater love or any greater expression of love than that manifested by God in sending His Son to die for the sins of men.

#### Conclusion

1. What I have been trying to say to you is that the demands of the rationalists of today for the kind of God one should have is far more fully met in the God we have revealed to us than in their demands or in their false God.
2. Let me, if I may sum up for you what we find this revealed God to be –
  - a. God of justice
    1. He cannot simply wipe out sin with no penalty
  - b. God of mercy
    1. He can be merciful, but that mercy must be expressed in such a manner as to violate neither His holiness nor His justice.
  - c. He is a God of love
    1. He loved so much that He Himself died for the sins of men that His mercy might flow to men after meeting His just and holy demands.
3. Will you not receive and worship and serve this revealed God?