

Articles and Sermons :: Wherein is love? -schaible

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Wherein is love?

by Evan Schaible

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

Herein is love the apostle says. Wherein is love? The very foundation on which we are to build our views of God's dealings with man is our view of God Himself. If we have a skewed view of the character of God, then our view of how God deals with man will be just as skewed, if not more so. Like the tracks on which a train runs, if those same tracks even begin to part one eighth of an inch, one hundred miles down the line they will have parted so much so that no train could possibly run them - so it is with our theological concepts. If they begin wrongly, and remain that way as we build upon them, then they will end up more and more wrong until finally we have built for ourselves marvelous examples of human wisdom - the same human wisdom that will one day be destroyed by God. So wherein is love?

Many a Christian today holds to a vastly different view of God than we see within the scriptures. They rightly declare that "God is love" and wrongly declare that God cannot hate - but as Paul Washer says, "because God is love He must also hate"; In fact the scriptures boldly declare that God hates all workers of iniquity (Psalm 5:5) (not just the works, but also the workers). Those monstrous men and woman, of whom we all had our conversation with in times past, are enemies of God, and this is why the apostle says, "not that we loved God". So when we ask the question, "wherein is love", the answer resounds back and tramples the pride of man under its feet, "not that we loved God". Love does not lie in the natural man, in fact it is written in the law concerning us all - we hated Him without a cause. The liberal theologian boasts of His love for God, he vaunts himself up saying he obeyed God, and because of His love for God, God saved him. That same liberal theologian forgets that love "vaunteth not itself", and fails to realize that the love he boasts of is not love at all - but in fact hatred for God and self-centered, prideful hatred at that. Love is not in the natural man.

The carnal man is an enemy of God through wicked works. Man forgets that the longer a thing is dead, the greater the stench of it, and the greater the stench of it the greater the awareness of the death of it. The spiritually dead try to hide their death by walking as the believer, immersing himself in good works, even preaching the gospel, all of this under the guise of life. The stink of death still creeps through the overlay of hypocrisy, rising into the nostrils of God like the stench that rises from the altars of baal, and the man stores up for himself wrath against the day of wrath. All of the carnal man's righteousness, that trophy of self centered on the mantle hell, is as a filthy rag in the eyes of God almighty. Love is not in the natural man.

By this point my critics are itching to refute me with a simple, but rather un-scriptural, argument by saying, "the opposite of love is not hate". I challenge even the simplest of believers to find me one place in scripture, and one place in reason, or one place in historical Christianity that challenges my view of hatred being the absence of love - or rather - the absence of the type of love that a Father gives to his son. The scriptures teach both a hatred of God toward the unregenerate sinner, and a love of God toward the unregenerate sinner. God's hatred for the unregenerate burns hotter than the flames of the eternal lake of fire, but His benevolent love burns just as bright. He has loved His creation, despite its abominations, enough to give us food to nourish our bodies, water to hydrate the dehydrated, light to illuminate the darkness, and above all, a Saviour to redeem the unsaved. But Jesus came to His own and His own received Him not, and they, like we all have, and would still if it weren't for the grace of God, hated Him without a cause.

So we have established that in our flesh is no good thing, that the wrath of God justly abides on every single unregenerate person, and as they walk in the lusts of their flesh, heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, they wait only for the fearful day when the wrath of God shall fall upon their heads and crush them to powder. Man is born utterly undone, amidst a people who are utterly undone, and unless there comes a divine intervention in the life of each man then they will tread the broad path of destruction, shaking their fist at God almighty, until finally they are cut asunder by the wrath of the Lamb, and cast into the lake of fire. Wherein is love? Love does not lie in man - until something in man happens to shed that love abroad in His heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.

The love of God is past finding out. In contrast to the hatred of man for God, the love of God for man is immeasurable. G

God does indeed love His sinful and wicked creation, however abominable we have made ourselves. The love of God is manifest in one thing, "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friend" - You see dear reader, it is not that we loved God, "but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins". It is true that God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

The love of God that extends towards all of humanity is expressed in the glorious gospel of His Son. All of humanity is under the curse of the law, as they have yielded themselves servants of sin to disobedience, and gained for themselves the just and holy hatred and anger of God. God is angry with the wicked everyday, and in the height of His anger, at the very time when man was without strength, Christ was born of a virgin and lived, tempted in all points as we are yet without sin, and died for the ungodly. This loving God, came to His own in the likeness of human flesh, but the love of God was met with cruel hatred as wicked men spat on Him and pulled out His beard. His own received Him not - and they fled from the light they so vehemently hated because their deeds were evil.

But the everlasting Son of God, the Alpha and Omega, God with us, endured the cruelty and hatred of men to lay down His life for His sheep. All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Father laid the iniquity of us all upon His only Son, and He became a curse for the cursed ones by hanging on a tree and enduring the torment and shame of crucifixion. The shedding of the Saviour's blood, the stripes upon His back, the bruising of the Father, the wrath that fell upon Him as He bore our sin in His own body on the tree, these are what bring us salvation. Why? He was bruised for our iniquity, He was wounded for our transgression, By His stripes we are healed, and The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all; He died as the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.

It pleased the Lord to bruise His only Son - and it must be remembered that the Father has as much to do with the death of Christ as those mere men, He was delivered up to the cross by the determinate counsel of the Father. When Jesus took upon Himself the sin of God's people, when He bore the sin of every single sinner who ever had, or ever would, repent and believe on His name, the Father forsook Him and the agony of that forsakement is utterly unimaginable to God hating man. Jesus had always known intimate communion with His Father, the Father always hears His Son, and on that cross He was forsaken, "eli eli, lama sabachthani", as the wrath of the very Father He came to please was poured upon His bloodstained Head, and He did it so that we might be delivered from the wrath to come - and appointed to mercy. He is the propitiation for our sin, that is, the atoning victim of the wrath of God, that God might be just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus. He that is in Christ is not appointed to wrath, as the cup has been emptied on the one in whom you stand.

Lastly, Jesus cried with eyes lifted to heaven, "It is finished", and died on the tree forsaken by the Father, and finally thefulness of times had come when the unspotted lamb of God would bear the wages of sin, and deliver His people from the curse of the law, tasting death for every man - but all is not yet done.

Jesus gave up His very soul as an offering for Sin, and was laid in the tomb. I can only imagine the sneer that snuck its way across the cruel mouth of the devil as he thought he had finally won. At the death of Christ all of hell rejoiced, but as the high priest that year had said, it is better for one man to die for the nation. The light of the world was seemingly extinguished, but not even death could hold the only Son of God. When God the Spirit quickened God the Son, and God the Father was glorified by His finished work, the light again broke forth from the tomb and all of heaven rejoiced at the glorious resurrection of the Messiah.

Jesus was quickened by the same quickening Spirit that works in every man the change of heart that shifts the disposition from that of hatred, to that of love. He rose again for our justification, and ascended to the right hand of the Father. He has risen, and that resurrection is ever so important to the gospel - because if Christ be not raised, then we are yet in our sin, and our faith is in vain. The everliving, everlasting, Son of God stands before the Father in the holiest of all, with your name written upon the palm of His hands by quarter inch nails, and when you call out to Him He pleads to the Father on your behalf and you are then justified in the sight of God.

The gospel is the power of salvation for all who believe, and that is what the Saviour demands of us, repentance and faith. Now the time is at hand, all is fulfilled, repent and believe the gospel. Seek the face of This merciful God and flee from the wrath that now abides upon you, and will one day fall and crush you to powder. Dear sinner, today is the day of salvation, now is the time of God's favor, repent and believe the gospel. Precious believer, let this hope, that Christ is risen and will one day return, be the anchor of your soul. Bask in the rays of the hope of the coming of the glorified Christ. Gaze upon the grace of God shown us on the cross, and let it teach you to live soberly, Godly and righteously in this present age. Be not as Judas, esteeming the saviour only of little worth, but be as John, and fall at His feet as of dead. He is risen

, he reigns in heaven supreme, and is worthy of your heart.