

Assassination of The President

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Study given by W.D. Frazee—December 6, 1963

“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” Romans 12:15.

That is sympathy. We take a glimpse of Sr. White's diary 62 years ago when President McKinley was assassinated. These are the words she confided after his death:

“I am not able to sleep past 2:00 a.m. I am awakened often at 1:00 at night with my heart drawn out in tender sympathy for the bereaved wife of President McKinley. One is taken and the other left. The strong one upon whose affection she could ever lean is not. While he was in health fulfilling the duties of his office, an apparently friendly hand was extended which President McKinley was ready to grasp. That Judas' hand held a pistol and shot the President. Amid scenes of pleasant life and enjoyment came sorrow and sadness and suffering and woe. How could he do this terrible murderous action?

“My heart is in deep sympathy for the one who is left. I have been repeating over and over, oh, how short come all words of human sympathy. There are thousands who would speak words to relieve, if possible, the breaking heart. But they do not understand how feeble are words to comfort the bereaved one, who in her feebleness ever found a human heart in her husband, full of tenderness and compassion and love. The strong human arm upon which the frail, suffering wife leaned is not” Welfare Ministry, page 338.

I trust we all share to the extent of our ability in those tender thoughts of sympathy. We want to cultivate the spirit to weep with those who weep wherever they are, and whoever they may be.

This assassination is without doubt one more sign, a sad and terrible sign, of the age in which we live. With it a token of the near approach of the coming of Jesus, the only answer to all these problems. The apostle Paul says:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection,

trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 2 Timothy 3:1-3.

"We are living in the time of the end. The fast fulfilling signs of the times declare that the coming of Christ is near at hand. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. . . .

"Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, page 11.

In Matthew 24:37-39 Jesus likens the days just before His coming to the time of Noah. And when we go back to Genesis 6:11 we find that a distinguishing sign of that time was that the earth was filled with violence. So this outstanding sign of the violence that is filling our world shows us that we are in the time like the days of Noah. Jesus says it means He is soon to come.

As we think of this young man (the youngest to ever sit in the chair as President) so suddenly and cruelly taken away, a thought that comes to us is the price of leadership. A man who in this world aspires to position makes himself a mark not only for ridicule and malice, but for the assassin's weapon.

As one put it, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." And while crowns of gold are not frequent today, there are wreaths of power and position that men strive for as eagerly as men have fought in other times for literal crowns. But how quickly it can all be swept away.

As we think of the effort men make to attain political position and grasp political power it is something to think about what sometimes goes with it. Thank God, we are striving for another time to come which once received can never be taken away from us.

This murder was inspired by Satan. The murderer was inspired by the Devil. It takes us back to the first murder and the first murderer. John says:

"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" 1 John 3:12.

As I have meditated on this I thought of Adam and Eve in the shadows of that day, the blackest day of their lives, save that one when they left Eden. Here were their two sons. One was the first to be assassinated, and the other was the first assassin. There they were, two brothers, one living and the other dead.

Today our Father looks down upon His children. He looks upon the assassinated and the assassins, upon those murdered and their murderers. A great pain fills His heart. Let us sympathize with God.

I would like to notice this text, because it is in some ways the most practical thought we may have on the assassination of the President. It brings it very close.

“Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” 1 John 3:15.

These words are an echo of the Savior's words in the Sermon on the Mount when commenting on the sixth commandment.

Oswald is not the only assassin in the world. There are others. They do not all carry guns. They do not all deal with weapons that project bullets. There is another weapon. It pierces deeper and sharper than any sword. It is the tongue that James says is set on fire of hell.

Whosoever hates is a murderer. Somebody says that is true, because the man that hates is likely to murder. That is true, and the thought is included.

“Murder first exists in the mind. He who gives hatred a place in the heart is setting his feet in the path of the murderer, and his offerings are abhorrent to God” *The Desire of Ages*, page 310.

Sin must first be conceived in the mind. Hate is the wound in which assassination is born. But the statement of John is more than that. He does not simply say that hate leads to murder. He says whoever hates his brother is a murderer.

Oh friends, if we will meditate on this for awhile, while we will not tend to excuse the foul crime of any assassin, it will keep us from any self-righteous, self-congratulation. It will keep us from the Pharisee's pray, I thank Thee that I am not as other men.

There are probably few of us here tonight who have never felt some feeling of malice, some rising tide of hatred. There are few tongues but have been used to pierce some heart. And who hates his brother is a murderer. It can be very literal.

Listen as I read the remarks of the Lord's messenger at Berrien Springs, Michigan on May 22, 1904, as the wife of Dr. Magan lay in the casket. Suppose you and I had been sitting in that congregation. What searching thoughts of self-examination might have thronged our minds as these words poured forth from the lips of Lord's messenger:

“Sr. Magan worked with her husband, struggling with him and praying that he might be sustained. But it seemed to her that some of our brethren had not a heart of flesh. A report was circulated that Sr. White had turned against Brother Magan. There was not a word of truth in this statement. But his poor wife who had toiled and sacrificed and prayed with him was informed that Sr.

White had taken a stand against her husband. Now the poor woman is gone leaving two motherless children, all this because of the work done by unsanctified tongues.

“Her husband has the comfort of the promise, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.’ Sr. Magan was a Christian. She was one of Christ’s followers, and He loved her. Her works do follow her. This work of opposition and dissatisfaction is come from the enemy. It has cost the life of a wife and mother, but it has not taken away her crown of eternal life. Brethren and sisters, has there not been enough of this work of criticizing and accusing? I speak the truth as God has presented it to me. Sr. Magan died as a martyr right among her own brethren. My brethren, this work of hurting one another does not pay.”

Is it a good thing to circulate unkind, critical reports? Ah, my friends, here was somebody who was assassinated by the great enemy using not some anarchist. Not some rebel against human government. Just some good members of the church who had a juicy morsel of gossip to pass around. They killed her. There she lay in the coffin. The Lord’s messenger testified to what killed her.

Let’s go back twenty-two years before that. James White is the victim this time. What killed James White? Overwork, bearing the burdens of this cause. But something else killed him. It is amazing how many burdens men can bear if they have the support and cooperation of their fellow workers. But when to those burdens of leadership are added the burdens of criticism and fault-finding, something is going to happen. Something can snap. Something can give way.

A few months after her husband’s death, Sr. White penned these words to the Battle Creek church:

“My husband was hunted to death. And those who have acted their part faithfully for Satan saw him in his coffin, removed from the strife of tongues. He died of a broken heart, and the Lord let him rest. I pray the Lord to forgive you. I warn you not to do to another what you have done to him. Will you send others to their death, death by your persecuting tongue, your suspicions, your envy, your jealousy? Will you cultivate the worst traits of character in indulging in censoring, backbiting, and falsehood? Is this the element that you love, and will you choose this atmosphere which is the poison of hell?”

So there have been people assassinated where a gun was never used, a sword was never lifted. The human tongue was the weapon. So you see what James and John are talking about when they deal with this problem. Our text says that whosoever hates his brethren is, not might become, a murderer.

There is more to it still. Hate not only kills its victims, it kills the one whose heart is possessed. Love is life giving.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death” 1 John 3:14.

The man who abides in death is a candidate for the grave. And there is many a man who is killing himself by inches. What a cruel, torturing death is it, wearing out his life forces by the hate which he indulges in his mind and soul. Hate does something to the stomach. It hinders digestion. It does something to the liver. It does something to the heart. It does something to every cell of the body.

He that loves not his brother abides in death. Therefore we should be very careful even in dwelling upon the hate and wicked and murderous deeds of others. If we take a glimpse, we must turn away, because by beholding we become changed.

Listen to this very interesting statement from the servant of the Lord written in the *Review and Herald* of August 8, 1893:

“In this world we shall become hopelessly perplexed as the devil wants us to be if we keep looking upon those things that are perplexing. For by dwelling upon them and talking of them we become discouraged. Any criticizing others because they fail to manifest love we shall kill the precious plant of love in our own hearts.”

So if our brethren fail to love us, we had better not be thinking about it too much. Leave them with God and pray for them. But let it not discourage us and depress us too much. It may kill the love out of our own hearts if we meditate on it too much. Let's fear to dwell upon, to behold and talk of, the great mistakes others are making by not manifesting love to their brethren and sisters.

I bring you to this mighty view that this assassination should cause us to think of as never before. Soon the whole world will be divided into two classes. A hord of assassins on one hand and their marks, their intended victims on the other. That is what the book of Revelation is talking about. The great focal point of Revelation is the coming crisis when nearly all the world, under the leadership of Satan, will decide to assassinate the people of God.

We are going to be in one camp or the other. We will either be among those who are marked for assassination, or we will be in the group who are doing the assassinating. We will be among the murdered or the murderers.

I know that when the plagues are falling God's people will be protected. But they are going to be killed just as truly as if they were killed. As far as the purpose of man and the Devil is concerned they will have done everything they could do to bring it about. Also they themselves will go through a terrible death struggle.

Jesus went through a similar experience. He came to the close of His life. Although He had done nothing to deserve death, He was marked for assassination by the religious leaders of His time. They chose to use as the betrayer of Jesus one who had in his earthly life been very close to the Savior. That is going to be repeated. Jesus tells us as His prophetic eye took in the distant future:

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold”
Matthew 24:9-12.

Do you think that any of us will have to meet the test Jesus met? Betrayed by someone close to us? Some relative or friend? Yes. From the *Review and Herald* of December 20, 1898 I read:

“Those who apostatize in time of trial will bear false witness and betray their brethren to secure their own safety. They will tell where the brethren are concealed, putting the wolves on their track.”

Won't that be something to have a mob surprise God's people who are in hiding, thinking they are in safety. And when the mob comes, perhaps it will be seen the one who is guiding the party, leading the pack of wolves is one who until a few weeks before that was a member of the church in good and regular standing.

Unless we are willing to give up our lives for Jesus' sake, we will be willing to take the lives of our brethren for our own safety. There will be no middle ground. We shall either be so like Jesus that we are willing to give our lives for Him and others, or we shall be so like Satan that we will be willing to take the life of anybody who stands in our way.

What a world this will be when it is filled with a horde of assassins. So as I have thought about these things I pray that God may keep me from being an assassin. I would pray it in a very definite and realistic and sincere way. From within the heart of man proceed all these things. My only hope of being kept from these terrible things is to be so emptied of self and sin and hatred and self-love that Jesus can be fully revealed in me. I choose that.

How do we go about getting that love? I like the way it is put here:

“We love Him, because He first loved us” 1 John 4:19.

The New English Bible translates it:

“We love because He loved us first.”

There is no other way to love. The love of God is bigger than the ocean, bigger than the universe. You and I can have that love revealed in our heart. There is no other love like His, therefore if we are to have a love like His it must be His love. We receive it as we behold Him, and choose. Faith and love work and grow up together. We love Him because He first loved us.

Love and pain are associated. They have been ever since sin began. They will continue until sin is ended. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that from its very beginning sin has brought to the heart of God. You can't love somebody and not suffer if they are suffering.

Notice how the heart of Sr. White was saddened and softened and wrung with sympathy concerning a woman she had never met. It was the love of God in her heart that thus cried out in pain. And if that love is in our hearts, we will take the pain of this world as Jesus bore the sorrows of all men.

We can never carry as much as Jesus. No, just a tiny bit. Probably we can carry more than we are carrying, though. And the more our hearts reach out to love Him and others the less time we will want to spend with our petty difficulties, our little disappointments, our petty ambitions, our little disagreements.

We can take the pain instead of making the pain. And if we will take the pain we will end up taking the focus of it in the coming assassination when all God's children are marked for death. Then we will become the focal point of all the hate of this world.

But Jesus will be there with us. Like the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace we shall discern the form of the fourth.

But I repeat, unless we take the pain, we will make the pain. We will in hating this one and that one come eventually to hate all that is holy and even God Himself, and join in battle against the ruler of the universe, willing to assassinate Him.

That is what happened at Calvary. Men and devils leagues together to assassinate the only true innocent one who ever walked this world. They will do it again soon in the person of His children.

Is it really true that every one is going to be in one group or the other? Is it true that the choices we make tend in this direction or that direction? Why would anyone choose to be an assassin? Why would anyone choose to be in the company of Cain and Judas?

To escape that in the issue that is about to break means that we must have so much love that we are gladly willing to be the mark for whatever our Father permits. To reveal His love on one hand and the demonstration of evil on the other. Like Jesus in Gethsemane we say, "The cup which my Father has given me shall I not drink?"

I am so thankful for Jesus' love. The good news is that it is a gift. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. In that gift all heaven was poured out.

The heart of God was poured out. And it was for the purpose of making you like Him in love.

We need not fear. Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the judgment because we are like Him. And the best part of the news is that the minute we choose that, He counts us His. The moment we choose to be like Him, He counts us as though we were already like Him. He accepts us as though love were already perfected in us. He counts us His friends, His children. He depends upon us and gives us a rating in heaven as though we were reaching a hundred percent—all because we choose what He chooses.

I can't think of terms more liberal. Why would He do it? Because He loves us. He wants every one of us to be on the side of love instead of hate. Take the pain instead of making the pain. Let's send Him the word we are heart to heart with Him, that we choose to make Him glad.

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