

LEARNING HIS CHARACTER BY
RIGHTLY
DIVIDING
THE WORD OF
GOD

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CHAPTER 1

Rightly Dividing the Word of God

An Introduction

Key Text

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. {2 Timothy 2:15} KJV

Don't Wrest Scripture

As also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. {2 Peter 3:16} KJV

If a student of the Bible does not rightly divide the word of Truth he or she will twist or wrest the scriptures to his or her own destruction.

The Cause of Religious Discord

Most, if not all of the trouble in the religious world in general, and in Christendom in particular, is the result of not rightly dividing the word of truth.

Various denominations quote passages of scripture, interpret those passages in their own way and claim to have the word of God to support their doctrines.

Babylon

Yet although quoting the same passages the various denominations arrive at different doctrinal conclusions!

And they all claim to be right!

This is confusion!

Remember that another word for religious confusion is Babylon!

Do Not Be Blown About

God does not want us to be tossed to and fro, and be carried about with every wind of doctrine.

God want us to speak the truth in love that we may grow up into Christ in all things!

That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ: {Ephesians 4: 14-15} KJV

All Scripture Profitable

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. {2 Timothy 3: 13-17} KJV

We must study carefully.

We must examine the reasons for our doctrines.

We must be sure that we have the truth, not by being brain washed by an organization but by the Spirit of God through rightly dividing the word of God.

Snares

False Doctrines are Satanic Snares

False doctrines hold people in mental and spiritual captivity.

Most false doctrines are popular and have been in existence for such a long time that people accept them without question.

Jesus gave a warning about this.

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to [his] father or [his] mother, [It is] a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, [he shall be free]. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. [Ye] hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with [their] lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men. {Matthew 15: 1-9} KJV

Guidelines for Rightly Dividing

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. {John 5:39} KJV

Let us also read it from the NEB.

You study the scriptures diligently, supposing that in having them you have eternal life; yet, although their testimony points to Me, you refuse to come to Me for that life. {John 5:39} NEB

Here were Pharisees “studying” diligently, even “knowing” the passages of scripture by heart, but not understanding them. They never saw Christ in the scriptures they were so diligently studying.

First Guideline

The entire Bible (O.T and N. T) testifies, bears witness to Christ and brings us to Christ to receive salvation. Let us open our Bibles and read Acts 8: 26-39.

First Guideline Continued

Therefore any Christ-less study or interpretation of scripture is not rightly dividing the word of truth.

Remember the rebuke Jesus gave the Sadducees.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor

the power of God. {Matthew 22:29} KJV

Second Guideline

When studying scripture we must pray to God in the name of Jesus and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. {John 14:26} KJV

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show [it] unto you. {John 16: 13-14} KJV

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. {Psalm 199:18} KJV

Third Guideline

Careful study requires:-

- Comparing scripture with scripture
- Letting scripture interpret scripture
- Finding all the texts that have a bearing on the subject and not jumping to a conclusion on one text

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts. For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little: {Isaiah 28: 9-10} KJV

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. {1 Corinthians 2: 11-13} KJV



Fourth Guideline

There should be, in fact there will be progressive advancement in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, [and] liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth [cometh] knowledge and understanding. {Proverbs 2:3-6} KJV

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself. {John 7: 17} KJV

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. {Hebrews 5: 12-14} KJV

The Ongoing and Ultimate Results

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. {John 17: 17} KJV

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. {John 8: 32} KJV

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: {Ephesians 4: 13} KJV

Pitfalls to Avoid

Of these things put [them] in remembrance, charging [them] before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, [but] to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane [and] vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. {2 Timothy 2: 14-18} KJV

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And [that] they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. {2 Timothy 2: 23-26} KJV

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, [even] as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able [to bear it], neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas [there is] among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I [am] of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who [is] Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, [ye are] God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. {1 Corinthians 3: 1-11} KJV

Glorious End Results of Rightly Dividing the Word

1. Sanctification
2. Freedom from error and sin
3. Unity
4. Perfection

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. {Hebrews 6: 1-3} KJV

CHAPTER 2

The Scriptures, Our Safeguard

The scriptures are our safeguard against sin and error.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. {Psalm 119: 11} KJV

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. {John 8: 32} KJV

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God’s work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.”{G.C chapter 37 - page 593/ paragraph 1}

A Safeguard in the Final Crisis

“Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them,

they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?" {G.C chapter 37 – page 593-4/ paragraph 2}

Bible Truth Exposes Popular Religious Errors

"The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church." {G.C chapter 37 – page 596}

Search for Yourself

"Notwithstanding the Bible is full of warnings against false teachers, many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy. There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's word that they are light bearers? A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world leads many to follow in the steps of learned men; and by their reluctance to investigate for themselves, they are becoming hopelessly fastened in the chains of error. They see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible; and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the opposition of the clergy to turn them from the light. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls dare not think differently from the minister; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, of another." {G.C chapter 37 – page 596-7}



Error Cannot Honour God

“The truth and the glory of God are inseparable; it is impossible for us, with the Bible within our reach, to honor God by erroneous opinions. Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is molded by the faith. If light and truth is within our reach, and we neglect to improve the privilege of hearing and seeing it, we virtually reject it; we are choosing darkness rather than light. “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Proverbs 16:25. Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin, when there is every opportunity to know the will of God. A man is traveling and comes to a place where there are several roads and a guideboard indicating where each one leads. If he disregards the guideboard, and takes whichever road seems to him to be right, he may be ever so sincere, but will in all probability find himself on the wrong road.” {G.C chapter 37 – page 597-8}

No ‘Guess’ Work

“God has given us His word that we may become acquainted with its teachings and know for ourselves what He requires of us. When the lawyer came to Jesus with the inquiry, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” the Saviour referred him to the Scriptures, saying: “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” Ignorance will not excuse young or old, nor release them from the punishment due for the transgression of God’s law; because there is in their hands a faithful presentation of that law and of its principles and claims. It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul’s salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself. However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation. He has a chart pointing out every waymark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything.” {G.C chapter 37 – page 598}

First and Highest Duty

“It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.” {G.C chapter 37 – page 598}

Beware of Modern Sophistry

“The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: “Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God.” Mark 12:24. The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” John 7:17. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.” {G.C chapter 37 page 598-9}

Exert All the Powers of the Mind

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. {Hebrews 5: 12-14}

“We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can, the deep things of God; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems. We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God and a sincere desire to learn His will. We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth.” {G.C chapter 37 – page 599}

Never Study the Bible Without Prayer

“The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent

us from wresting truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart so to comprehend God's word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises. We should make the psalmist's petition our own: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Psalm 119:18. Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. Thus "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19." {G.C chapter 37 – page 599-600}

The Comforter Will Teach You All things

"Jesus promised His disciples: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26. But the teachings of Christ must previously have been stored in the mind in order for the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance in the time of peril. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart," said David, "that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119:11." {G.C chapter 37 – page 600}

The Most Solemn Period of History

"We are living in the most solemn period of this world's history. The destiny of earth's teeming multitudes is about to be decided. Our own future well-being and also the salvation of other souls depend upon the course which we now pursue. We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth. Every follower of Christ should earnestly inquire: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon His word, especially upon the scenes of the judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan's enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God; the foe is lurking near, ready at any moment, should you become lax and drowsy, to spring upon you and make you his prey." {G.C chapter 37 – page 601}

CHAPTER 3

Correct Principles of Interpretation - Part 1

God is Infinite

- The Godhead is infinite
- We are finite
- Therefore there can never come a time when we shall exhaust the understanding of the knowledge of God's nature and character
- The study of the infinite must - of necessity - present serious challenges to our finite minds
- Moreover, tradition and misinterpretation, fuelled by Satan's falsehoods have blinded our minds.

The Spirit of Wisdom

When the apostle Paul realized the infinite greatness of God, he prayed this prayer in Ephesians 1: 17-23.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,

according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places], Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. {Ephesians 1: 17-23}

Our Eyes Must be Opened

The eyes of our understanding must be opened and enlightened in order for us to turn from darkness to light and from the power of satanic deception to the power of God's truth.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and [from] the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. {Acts 26: 15-18}

No Private Interpretation

Let us consider a key text.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost. {2 Peter 1: 20-21}

What is a Private Interpretation?

A private interpretation is interpreting the scriptures according to our human usage of words and according to our culture, linguistics and humanistic world view point.

Instead we must let scripture interpret scripture by comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. {1 Corinthians 2: 11-13} KJV

Statements and Principles

- There are in scripture many statements
- And there are in scripture many great principles of truth and righteousness
- Sometimes it seems that there is a conflict or contradiction between the statements of scripture and the principles of scripture
- But in truth and righteousness there can be no contradiction between the statements of scripture and the principles of scripture.

Statements and Principles (continued)

- What is a statement?
- What is a principle?
- Statements are descriptions of actions, events, history, prophecies.
- Principles are concrete, established, immutable lines of scriptural truth.
- Principles are arrived at by the careful comparison of statements, allowing scripture to interpret scripture until a line of truth unfolds.
- Once a line of truth has been definitely established, the discovery of another apparently contradictory statement needs careful study because it cannot destroy the line of truth.

Statements and Principles (continued)

Here are two assignments for your group discussions:

- Establish the principle of the truth of the seventh day Sabbath and explain the apparent contradiction of Colossians 2:16-17.

- Establish the principle of truth concerning the state of the dead and explain 1 Samuel 28: 11-20.

Private Interpretation

Another Look

Let us read 1 Corinthians 2: 9-11 in the NEB.

But in the words of scripture, things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining, all prepared by God for those who love Him, these it is that God has revealed to us through the Holy Spirit For the Spirit explores everything, even the depths of God's own nature. Among men, who knows what a man is but the man's own spirit within him? In the same way, only the Spirit of God knows what God is. This is the spirit that we have received from God, and not the spirit of the world, so that we may know all that God of His own grace has given to us; and because we are interpreting spiritual truths to those who have the spirit, we speak to these gifts of God in words found for us not by our human wisdom but by the Spirit.
{1 Corinthians 2: 9-11} NEB

The World View of Human Wisdom Versus Divine Wisdom

Human wisdom (e.g. the dictionary) defines words as those words describe human behaviour. So in the realm of human behaviour the dictionary is the undisputed authority.

If divine behaviour and human behaviour were the same then the dictionary would serve both.

But they are not the same. The Lord has unmistakably warned us of this. For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. {Isaiah 55: 8-9} KJV

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. {James 1: 19-20}

Wrong Interpretation

Therefore when we read statements of God's actions or behaviour, we are not

to interpret those statements by our understanding of human actions.

We must let scripture explain what those statements mean when describing God's actions or behaviour. If we do not do this, our interpretations will be wrong.

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. {Isaiah 55: 8-9}

An Important Example

Question: Does God harden people's hearts?

And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. {Exodus 4: 21} KJV

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. {Exodus 7:3} KJV

And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. {Exodus 14: 17} KJV

For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, [and] that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. {Joshua 11: 20}

These passages of scripture seem to be saying that God does harden the hearts of people.

Applying the Correct Rule of Interpretation

Let us read on and allow scripture to unfold the correct interpretation.

But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. {Exodus 8: 15} KJV

Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? {1 Samuel 6: 6} KJV

Here we are told that Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their own hearts.

Apparent Contradictions

- We have before us in the word of God two different sets of statements. One set saying that God hardened Pharaoh's heart; another set saying Pharaoh hardened his own heart.
- What we need to do is to find the principle concerning how God deals with the hearts of people.
- Remember, a principle is a great underlying, unchanging truth arrived at by letting scripture statements interpret themselves.

Establishing the Principle of How God Deals with our Hearts

If God hardens people's hearts, in our human way of understanding the word harden, would that be right? Would that be fair?

In Ezekiel's day, some were saying that God was unfair. Therefore, God answered them forthrightly.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: [and] not that he should return from his ways, and live? {Ezekiel 18: 23} KJV

Let Us Read the Entire Passage

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: [and] not that he should return from his ways, and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, [and] doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked [man] doeth, shall he live?

All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? When a righteous [man] turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked [man] turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn [yourselves] from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live ye. {Ezekiel 18: 20-32} KJV

The Key Texts Establishing the Principle

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: [and] not that he should return from his ways, and live? {Ezekiel 18: 23} KJV

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live ye. {Ezekiel 18: 32} KJV

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. {2 Peter 3:9} KJV

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. {1 Timothy 2: 1-4} KJV

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. {John 3: 16} KJV

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. {Revelation 22: 17} KJV

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? {Romans 2:4} KJV

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. {Romans 2: 5-11} KJV

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. if ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it]. {Isaiah 1: 18-20} KJV

Conclusion

- If we interpret the word “harden” to mean how we humans would harden someone’s heart, then God does not harden anyone’s heart.
- If we interpret the word “harden” to mean how God “hardens”, when we quote the text that God “hardened” Pharaoh’s heart, we need to explain it.
- How does God “harden”? He tries His utmost to soften the heart by revealing His love and truth, by drawing the heart to Himself. If the man or woman keeps on resisting God’s love, he or she hardens his or her own heart.

- So God “hardens” by trying to soften and the rejecter of His love and truth hardens his own heart.

Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? {1 Samuel 6: 6} KJV

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, [saying], Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. {Jeremiah 31: 3} KJV

CHAPTER 4

Lessons From Pharaoh's Stubbornness

Spirit of Prophecy Passages

“God had declared concerning Pharaoh, “I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.” Exodus 4:21. There was no exercise of supernatural power to harden the heart of the king. God gave to Pharaoh the most striking evidence of divine power, but the monarch stubbornly refused to heed the light. Every display of infinite power rejected by him, rendered him the more determined in his rebellion. The seeds of rebellion that he sowed when he rejected the first miracle, produced their harvest. As he continued to venture on in his own course, going from one degree of stubbornness to another, his heart became more and more hardened, until he was called to look upon the cold, dead faces of the first-born.

God speaks to men through His servants, giving cautions and warnings, and rebuking sin. He gives to each an opportunity to correct his errors before they become fixed in the character; but if one refuses to be corrected, divine power does not interpose to counteract the tendency of his own action. He finds it more easy to repeat the same course. He is hardening the heart against the influence of the Holy Spirit. A further rejection of light places him where a far stronger influence will be ineffectual to make an abiding impression.

He who has once yielded to temptation will yield more readily the second

time. Every repetition of the sin lessens his power of resistance, blinds his eyes, and stifles conviction. Every seed of indulgence sown will bear fruit. God works no miracle to prevent the harvest. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7. He who manifests an infidel hardihood, a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. It is thus that multitudes come to listen with stoical indifference to the truths that once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect and resistance to the truth, and such is the harvest which they reap.

Those who are quieting a guilty conscience with the thought that they can change a course of evil when they choose, that they can trifle with the invitations of mercy, and yet be again and again impressed, take this course at their peril. They think that after casting all their influence on the side of the great rebel, in a moment of utmost extremity, when danger compasses them about, they will change leaders. But this is not so easily done. The experience, the education, the discipline of a life of sinful indulgence, has so thoroughly molded the character that they cannot then receive the image of Jesus. Had no light shone upon their pathway, the case would have been different. Mercy might interpose, and give them an opportunity to accept her overtures; but after light has been long rejected and despised, it will be finally withdrawn." {P.P page 268-9}

"In the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unerring certainty. The reaping will testify as to what the sowing has been. The slothful worker is condemned by his work. The harvest bears witness against him. So in spiritual things: the faithfulness of every worker is measured by the results of his work. The character of his work, whether diligent or slothful, is revealed by the harvest. It is thus that his destiny for eternity is decided.

Every seed sown produces a harvest of its kind. So it is in human life. We all need to sow the seeds of compassion, sympathy, and love; for we shall reap what we sow. Every characteristic of selfishness, self-love, self-esteem, every act of self-indulgence, will bring forth a like harvest. He who lives for self is sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh he will reap corruption.

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy.

God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born, and the first-born of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow. {C.O.L page 84-5}

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine."

Thus men excuse their neglect of God's gifts. They look upon God as severe and tyrannical, as watching to spy out their mistakes and visit them with judgments. They charge Him with demanding what He has never given, with reaping where He has not sown.

There are many who in their hearts charge God with being a hard master because He claims their possessions and their service. But we can bring to God nothing that is not already His. "All things come of Thee," said King David; "and of Thine own have we given Thee." 1 Chronicles 29:14. All things are God's, not only by creation, but by redemption. All the blessings of this life and of the life to come are delivered to us stamped with the cross of Calvary. Therefore the charge that God is a hard master, reaping where He has not sown, is false.

The master does not deny the charge of the wicked servant, unjust as it is; but taking him on his own ground he shows that his conduct is without excuse. Ways and means had been provided whereby the talent might have been improved to the owner's profit. "Thou oughtest," he said, "to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."

Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:14. All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render.

"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke

12:48. *We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. The unused capabilities are as much brought into account as are those that are improved. For all that we might become through the right use of our talents God holds us responsible. We shall be judged according to what we ought to have done, but did not accomplish because we did not use our powers to glorify God. Even if we do not lose our souls, we shall realize in eternity the result of our unused talents. For all the knowledge and ability that we might have gained and did not, there will be an eternal loss.*

But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure.

We should not talk of our own weakness and inability. This is a manifest distrust of God, a denial of His word. When we murmur because of our burdens, or refuse the responsibilities He calls upon us to bear, we are virtually saying that He is a hard master, that He requires what He has not given us power to do.

The spirit of the slothful servant we are often fain to call humility. But true humility is widely different. To be clothed with humility does not mean that we are to be dwarfs in intellect, deficient in aspiration, and cowardly in our lives, shunning burdens lest we fail to carry them successfully. Real humility fulfills God's purposes by depending upon His strength.

God works by whom He will. He sometimes selects the humblest instrument to do the greatest work, for His power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard, and by it we pronounce one thing great and another small; but God does not estimate according to our rule. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, or that what is small to us must be small to Him. It does not rest with us to pass judgment on our talents or to choose our work. We are to take up the burdens that God appoints, bearing them for His sake, and ever going to Him for rest. Whatever our work, God is honored by wholehearted, cheerful service. He is pleased when we take up our duties with gratitude, rejoicing that we are accounted worthy to be co-laborers with Him.

The Talent Removed

Upon the slothful servant the sentence was, "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Here, as in the reward of the faithful worker, is indicated not merely the reward at the final judgment but the gradual process of retribution in this life. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world: every power unused will weaken and decay. Activity is the law of life; idleness is death. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Corinthians 12:7. Employed to bless others, his gifts increase. Shut up to self-serving they diminish, and are finally withdrawn. He who refuses to impart that which he has received will at last find that he has nothing to give. He is consenting to a process that surely dwarfs and finally destroys the faculties of the soul.

Let none suppose that they can live a life of selfishness, and then, having served their own interests, enter into the joy of their Lord. In the joy of unselfish love they could not participate. They would not be fitted for the heavenly courts. They could not appreciate the pure atmosphere of love that pervades heaven. The voices of the angels and the music of their harps would not satisfy them. To their minds the science of heaven would be as an enigma.

In the great judgment day those who have not worked for Christ, those who have drifted along, carrying no responsibility, thinking of themselves, pleasing themselves, will be placed by the Judge of all the earth with those who did evil. They receive the same condemnation.

Many who profess to be Christians neglect the claims of God, and yet they do not feel that in this there is any wrong. They know that the blasphemer, the murderer, the adulterer, deserves punishment; but as for them, they enjoy the services of religion. They love to hear the gospel preached, and therefore they think themselves Christians. Though they have spent their lives in caring for themselves, they will be as much surprised as was the unfaithful servant in the parable to hear the sentence, "Take the talent from him." Like the Jews, they mistake the enjoyment of their blessings for the use they should make of them.

Many who excuse themselves from Christian effort plead their inability for the work. But did God make them so incapable? No, never. This inability has been produced by their own inactivity and perpetuated by their deliberate

choice. Already, in their own characters, they are realizing the result of the sentence, "Take the talent from him." The continual misuse of their talents will effectually quench for them the Holy Spirit, which is the only light. The sentence, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness," sets Heaven's seal to the choice which they themselves have made for eternity." {C.O.L page 362-365}

"It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power." {D.A page 322-3}

"It is not God that puts the blinder before the eyes of men or makes their hearts hard; it is the light which God sends to his people, to correct their errors, to lead them in safe paths, but which they refuse to accept,—it is this that blinds their minds and hardens their hearts." {R.H October 21st, 1890}

"The patience and long-suffering of God, which should soften and subdue the soul, has an altogether different influence upon the careless and sinful. It leads them to cast off restraint, and strengthens them in resistance." {R.H August 14th, 1900}

"Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth ruins if it does not save. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul." {5T page 134}

CHAPTER 5

Correct Principles of Interpretation - Part 2

Introduction

- We are still studying the basic principle of avoiding private interpretation by allowing the scripture to interpret scripture and to give right understanding of the use of certain words in scripture.
- So even before we examine the supreme principle of interpretation which is Christ (His incarnation, his earthly life, death, resurrection) let us consider an important point.

An Important Point

- For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? {John 5: 46-47} KJV

- *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. {Luke 16:31}*

The Important Point is this

By allowing scripture to interpret scripture, we can correctly understand certain Old Testament word usages and therefore be better able to accept Christ as the supreme principle of scriptural interpretation.

Applying the Principles

Let us now apply the principles we have been studying so far to statements which say that God “destroys” or “smites” in the Old Testament.

Let us begin with Moses in Deuteronomy 28.

Deuteronomy 28

- In Deuteronomy 28: 1-4, we have a record of the blessings of obedience.
- In Deuteronomy 28: 15-68, we have a much longer record of the punishments of disobedience.
- There is a variety of punitive terms used.

Punitive Terms

Let us itemize some of these terms:

- “cursed shall those be...” verse 16-19
- “the Lord shall send upon thee cursing and vexation...until thou be destroyed...” verse 20
- “the Lord shall smite thee...” verse 22, 27-28
- “Moreover He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt...” verse 60
- “and the Lord shall scatter thee...” verse 64

Described as Direct Decrees of God

- Notice the “punishments” are described as if the Lord directly decreed them.
- This is certainly how we would understand such statements if describing human behaviour.
- But remember Isaiah 55: 8-9

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. **{Isaiah**

55: 8-9} KJV

Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

Let us now find out the mechanism underlying these “punishments”.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go [to be] among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God [is] not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. {Deuteronomy 31: 16-18} KJV

Establishing a Principle

- There are some very important statements here which spell out a fundamental principle.
- “They will forsake me”
- “I will forsake them”
- “I will hide my face from them”
- They shall be devoured”
- “Many evils and troubles shall befall them”
- Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?”

Sin Produces Evil and Destruction by Separation from God

- This is the fundamental principle; sin separates from God’s protection
- Sin’s separation from God produced all the diseases, suffering and destruction which came upon ancient Israel.
- *And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where [be] all his miracles which our*

fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. {Judges 6: 13} KJV

- And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD [is] with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. {2 Chronicles 15: 2} KJV
- And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. {2 Chronicles 24: 20} KJV
- O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, [and] they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. {Jeremiah 17: 13} KJV

A Biblical Word Study on “I Will Hide my Face”

- Sin separates from God and hides God’s face.

Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear. {Isaiah 59: 1-2} KJV

- The separation from God and the hiding of His face is the mechanism of God’s wrath.

For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. {Isaiah 54: 7-8} KJV

- This is the same mechanism that caused the flood.

For this [is as] the waters of Noah unto me: for [as] I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. {Isaiah 54: 9} KJV

Word Study on “Hiding His Face” (continued)

And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end [shall be]: for they [are] a very froward generation, children in whom [is] no faith. {Deuteronomy 32: 20} KJV

Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. {Psalm 104: 29} KJV

And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. {Isaiah 8: 17} KJV

And [there is] none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. {Isaiah 64: 7} KJV

And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them. {Ezekiel 39: 23-24} KJV

Our Only Safety

Hear, O LORD, [when] I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. [When thou saidst], Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. {Psalm 27: 7-8} KJV

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [ye] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded. {James 4: 7-8} KJV

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. {Luke 19: 10} KJV

Rightly Dividing the Word

- We see that Israel’s sufferings were often described as punishments striking them by God’s direct decree.
- Such an understanding allows Satan to hide himself and conceal his

terrible work.

- In truth and in fact all their sufferings, destructions, smittings and deaths were caused by sin and Satan's government of sin and evil, not by God.
- Notice we have arrived at the conclusion from the Bible and Bible alone.

The Spirit of Prophecy Agrees

"The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control." {G.C page 35-6}

Another Example

- And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which [was] with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people. {2 Samuel 24: 1-2} KJV

- Notice the language.
- Note that this numbering of the people was a sin.

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. {2 Samuel 24: 10} KJV

- According to James 1: 13-15, God cannot move or tempt anyone to sin.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. {James 1: 13-15} KJV

- Therefore it must have been Satan who moved David to sin in numbering Israel and Judah.

Another Scripture Gives the Answer

And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. {1 Chronicles 21: 1} KJV

- Now note well that 2 Samuel 24: 1 and 1 Chronicles 21: 1 are describing the same thing.
- How do we rightly divide the word between these two texts?
- God has a given freedom of choice to all. David chose to yield to Satan's temptation and sin by numbering Israel.

One More Example

In 1 Chronicles chapter 10, compare the first 6 verses with the last 2 verses.

Conclusion

- Some people claim that the Bible must be taken exactly as it reads.
- That is true.
- But it can only be read correctly by rightly dividing the word.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. {2 Timothy 2: 15} KJV

Closing Gem

"Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation.

If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God's word." {C.O.L – page 112/paragraph 3}

CHAPTER 6

Some More Old Testament Witnesses

If the Jews had better understood what we now call the Old Testament scriptures, better called the law (torah) and the prophets, they would have recognized Jesus as the true Messiah.

But I have greater witness than [that] of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. {John 5: 36-40} KJV

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. {John 6: 45} KJV

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. {Luke 16: 29-31} KJV

- Tradition and misinterpretation clouded their minds.
- And rather than let scripture interpret scripture, they fell into error of “private” interpretation.

- Their picture of God was faulty and their messianic expectations were way off mark.
- A wrong picture of God contributed in no small way to their rejection of Christ.
- This is a lesson for us.
- The correct interpretation of O.T scriptures paves the way for us to accept the true picture of God which Jesus came to reveal.
- A faulty picture of God based on faulty O.T interpretation makes it difficult for people to accept Christ's message about the Father's character.
- We have already looked at Moses (in Deuteronomy) and Isaiah
- There we saw that the mechanism of wrath, smiting, destruction and sending affliction was clearly explained.
- Sin separates from God and produces suffering, destruction and death.
- But we shall consider some more witnesses.

Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.
{Psalm 34: 21} KJV

The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. **{Proverbs 11: 3} KJV**

The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in [their own] naughtiness. **{Proverbs 11: 5-6} KJV**

As righteousness [tendeth] to life: so he that pursueth evil [pursueth it] to his own death. **{Proverbs 11: 19} KJV**

For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. **{Proverbs 8: 35-36} KJV**



In the way of righteousness [is] life; and [in] the pathway [thereof there is] no death. {Proverbs 12: 28} KJV

- The wise man Solomon clearly explained that sin produces destruction and death.
- We are speaking here of sin in general.
- All sickness, suffering, death and destruction is the result of Satan's government of sin coupled with sinful human choices and mistakes cumulatively and exponentially, down through the ages.

Hosea

- Hosea portrays God as the God of love and compassion and mercy.

When Israel [was] a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. [As] they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. {Hosea 11: 1-4} KJV

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. {Hosea 14: 4} KJV

Hosea clearly stated that Israel's sin took her away from God and was the cause of her destruction. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me [is] thine help. {Hosea 13: 9} KJV*

O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. {Hosea 14:1} KJV

Hosea also shows that the cities of the plain (Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim) were "given up" to destruction. And God "giving them up" was his fierce anger or wrath. *And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt [him]. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? [how] shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? [how] shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I [am] God,*

and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city. {Hosea 11: 7-9} KJV

- Yet notwithstanding all these evidences, the chosen nation had a false concept of God's character.
- A whole book was written to correct their false views.
- But they did not learn the lesson. That book was Job.

Job

- The book of Job was written by Moses
- It was one of the earliest books of the O.T to be written
- Therefore it was available for study from early in Jewish national history after the Exodus.
- In Job 1, God asked Satan if he considered Job and saw his perfection.
- Satan argued that Job was only serving God for the rewards and blessings.
- In other words, Satan suggested that there is no genuine religion, only self-serving bargains.
- And Job was in it for what he could get.
- Job's devotion wasn't based on love and trust but on gain.
- Satan challenged God.
- God could not refute the challenge by words, only by demonstration.

But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath [is] in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. {Job 1: 11-12} KJV

- The meaning of and mechanism underlying how God “destroys” are clearly explained.

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job,



that [there is] none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he [is] in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. {Job 2: 3-7} KJV

- Satan was the one causing Job's suffering yet God said to Satan in Job 1: 3, "although thou movedst Me against him to destroy him without cause".
- The book exposes tradition.
- People in Job's day and all down through history believed that any calamity befalling a person was punishment by God for sin.
- They also believed that all that happens is God's will.
- Moreover, they believed that God directly causes both good and evil.
- So Job's friends told Job he was being punished by God for his sin.
- Job and his friends were unaware of the conversation between God and Satan.
- Job insisted that though God was causing his suffering it was not because he was being punished for sin.
- Eventually God spoke in chapters 38-41 to Job and his friends.
- God exposed their ignorance of the complexity of creation.
- He also showed them their utter ignorance of the complex chaos existing in a war torn sinful world.

"As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor

his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. . . . When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner.

Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who “hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” was looked upon by the Jews as “stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;” and they hid their faces from Him. Isaiah 53:4, 3

God had given a lesson designed to prevent this. The history of Job had shown that suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy. But Israel did not understand the lesson. The same error for which God had reproved the friends of Job was repeated by the Jews in their rejection of Christ.

The belief of the Jews in regard to the relation of sin and suffering was held by Christ's disciples. While Jesus corrected their error, He did not explain the cause of the man's affliction, but told them what would be the result. Because of it the works of God would be made manifest. “As long as I am in the world,” He said, “I am the light of the world.” Then having anointed the eyes of the blind man, He sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and the man's sight was restored. Thus Jesus answered the question of the disciples in a practical way, as He usually answered questions put to Him from curiosity. The disciples were not called upon to discuss the question as to who had sinned or had not sinned, but to understand the power and mercy of God in giving sight to the blind. It was evident that there was no healing virtue in the clay, or in the pool wherein the blind man was sent to wash, but that the virtue was in Christ.” {D.A page 470-1}

CHAPTER 7

Jesus Christ the Ultimate Key to Unlock all Scripture

The Express Image of God

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. {Hebrews 1: 1-4} KJV

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. {Colossians 1: 15-17} KJV

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. {Colossians 2: 8} KJV

All previous revelations given through the limitations of human language were merely anticipations of the revelation of God through his only begotten Son. God's revelation of himself through his Son is the pinnacle of his revelations throughout history. Jesus surpasses all previous revelations because he alone is the perfect reflection of God's total revelation; rather, everything before Christ must be understood in the light of Christ. So we must never think of Christ as merely part of God's total revelation, rather everything before Christ must be understood in the light of Christ. Hebrews 1: 1-3 reads thus in the NEB:

"When in former times God spoke to our forefathers, he spoke in a fragmentary and varied fashion through the prophets. But in this final age he has spoken to us in the son whom he has made heir to the whole universe and through whom he created all orders of existence: the son who is the effulgence of God's splendor and the stamp of God's very being..." {Hebrews 1: 1-3} NEB

"The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary, and in connection with the wondrous, central truth of the Saviour's atonement. Those who study the Redeemer's wonderful sacrifice grow in grace and knowledge." {S.D.A Bible Commentary Vol. 5 - page 1137}

The Logos

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. {John 1: 1-5} KJV

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. {John 1: 14} KJV

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [him]. {John 1: 18} KJV

The son of God is called the word (Greek logos). In the same way that words

express thoughts, so the Son expresses the Father.

The Knowledge of God's Character Shines in the Face of Jesus

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. {2 Corinthians 4: 6} KJV

"His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is seen "in the face of Jesus Christ." From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was "the image of God," the image of His greatness and majesty, "the outshining of His glory." It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love,—to be "God with us." Therefore it was prophesied of Him, "His name shall be called Immanuel."

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"—"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"—"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." {D.A chapter 1/ paragraphs 1-2}

Jesus Fully revealed what God Does and How He Does it

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself; but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. {John 5: 19-20} KJV

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am [he], and [that] I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.
{John 8: 28-29} KJV

So complete was the revelation of God's character by Christ that no aspect of God's character was left out!

Jesus is the Living Word, the True and Faithful Witness

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **{John 1: 1} KJV**

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
{Revelation 3: 14} KJV

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes [were] as a flame of fire, and on his head [were] many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on [his] vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. **{Revelation 19: 11-16} KJV**

What is the Sharp Sword?

For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **{Hebrews 4: 12} KJV**

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life. **{John 6: 63} KJV**



For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; {2 Corinthians 10: 3-5} KJV

Christ, the living word, is the supreme revealer of God's character and the ultimate interpretive key to unlock all scripture.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I [am] in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. {John 14: 6-11} KJV

Where do we find the true picture of God?

The answer that the Bible unequivocally and emphatically gives is Jesus Christ!

Conclusion

"All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18.

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men, and yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin.

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.” Verse 14.

“Unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world,” He said, “I manifested Thy name,” “that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.” John 17:6, A. R. V., 26.

“Love your enemies,” He bade them; “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;” “for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36.” {8T page 286/paragraphs 1-7}

CHAPTER 8

The Message Jesus Gave

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. {1 John 1: 5} KJV

What a wonderful revelation!

God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all!

We need to know the difference between light and darkness.

A good place to start is in John.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. {John 3: 19-21} KJV

Building Definitions

Darkness is sin and evil and their results.

Light is truth, righteousness, love and their results.

But let us continue our Bible search.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son: {Colossians 1: 12-13} KJV

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. {Hebrews 2: 14-15} KJV

To give light to them that sit in darkness and [in] the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. {Luke 1: 79} KJV

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. {John 8: 12} KJV

A careful comparison to these scriptures adds another dimension to our definition.

Darkness is death.

Light is life.

But there is more yet!

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. {1 John 2: 10-11} KJV

Therefore darkness is hatred.

Light is love.

We can summarize thus far:

Since God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all, then in God there is no sin, no evil, no hatred, no death!

In God there is love, truth, righteousness, goodness and life!

Therefore God can never be the source of sin, nor evil, nor hatred, nor falsehood, nor death!

God is the source of love, truth, righteousness and life!

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. {James 1: 16-17} KJV

Note well this quotation from E.G.W Letter 135 1897 (ISM, 118).

“We are to observe carefully every lesson Christ has given throughout His life and teaching. He does not destroy; He improves whatever he touches.”

Jesus is the Light of the World

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, [yet] my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. {John 8: 12-19} KJV

- Here we see another dimension of the definition of darkness.
- Darkness is not knowing (ignorance) the Father or the Son.
- The apostle John declared that the true light of Jesus had already begun to dispel the darkness.

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. {1 John 2:8} KJV

- Christ did only what the father did,
- All things that the Father did,
- And exactly as the Father did them.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. {John 5: 19-20} KJV

- However, the time came when Jesus was invited to destroy.

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw [this], they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save [them]. And they went to another village. {Luke 9: 51-56} KJV

- James and John had the view, based on tradition and misinterpretation, that God swiftly destroys those who reject Him.
- Since Jesus is the Son of God, they expected Him to do the same.
- They thought they had the precedent of scripture in the story of Elijah.
- Jesus' answer surprised them.

"James and John, Christ's messengers, were greatly annoyed at the insult shown to their Lord. They were filled with indignation because He had been so rudely treated by the Samaritans whom He was honoring by His presence. They had recently been with Him on the mount of transfiguration, and had seen Him glorified by God, and honored by Moses and Elijah. This manifest dishonor on the part of the Samaritans, should not, they thought, be passed over without marked punishment. {DA 487.1}

Coming to Christ, they reported to Him the words of the people, telling Him that they had even refused to give Him a night's lodging. They thought that a grievous wrong had been done Him, and seeing Mount Carmel in the

distance, where Elijah had slain the false prophets, they said, "Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" They were surprised to see that Jesus was pained by their words, and still more surprised as His rebuke fell upon their ears, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And He went to another village. {DA 487.2}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas. {DA 487.3}

Every human being, in body, soul, and spirit, is the property of God. Christ died to redeem all. Nothing can be more offensive to God than for men, through religious bigotry, to bring suffering upon those who are the purchase of the Saviour's blood." {D.A page 487-8}

- God has none of Satan's spirit.
- Therefore God does not have the disposition to hurt or destroy those who do not appreciate His work or who act contrary to His ideas.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. {1 John 4: 8} KJV

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. {1 John 1: 5} KJV

The Word of God Reveals His Character

"The word of God reveals His character. He Himself has declared His infinite love and pity. When Moses prayed, "Show me Thy glory," the Lord answered, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee." Exodus 33:18, 19. This is His glory. The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and

truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7. He is “slow to anger, and of great kindness,” “because He delighteth in mercy.” Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:18.” {S.C page 10/ paragraph 2}

Wrong Picture in spite of the Evidence

“God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.” {S.C page 10/ paragraph 3}

Jesus Fully Revealed God’s Character by His Life

“The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” John 1:18. “Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” Matthew 11:27. When one of the disciples made the request, “Show us the Father,” Jesus answered, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” John 14:8, 9.

In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, The Lord “hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Luke 4:18. This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man’s

nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love.

Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He wept over Jerusalem, the city He loved, which refused to receive Him, the way, the truth, and the life. They had rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness. His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He ever bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with the tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save.

Such is the character of Christ as revealed in His life. This is the character of God. It is from the Father's heart that the streams of divine compassion, manifest in Christ, flow out to the children of men. Jesus, the tender, pitying Saviour, was God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. **{S.C page 11-12}**

Jesus Fully Revealed God's Character by His Death

"It was to redeem us that Jesus lived and suffered and died. He became "a Man of Sorrows," that we might be made partakers of everlasting joy. God permitted His beloved Son, full of grace and truth, to come from a world of indescribable glory, to a world marred and blighted with sin, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. He permitted Him to leave the bosom of His love, the adoration of the angels, to suffer shame, insult, humiliation, hatred, and death. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. Behold Him in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, upon the cross! The spotless Son of God took upon Himself the burden of sin. He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man. This wrung from His lips the anguished cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matthew 27:46. It was the burden of sin, the sense of its terrible enormity, of its separation of the soul from God--it was this that broke the heart of the Son of God." {S.C page 13/ paragraph 1}

“Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion.” {D.A page 758/ paragraph 3}

Propitiation Given in Love

“But this great sacrifice was not made in order to create in the Father’s heart a love for man, not to make Him willing to save. No, no! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. The Father loves us, not because of the great propitiation, but He provided the propitiation because He loves us. Christ was the medium through which He could pour out His infinite love upon a fallen world. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” 2 Corinthians 5:19. God suffered with His Son. In the agony of Gethsemane, the death of Calvary, the heart of Infinite Love paid the price of our redemption.

Jesus said, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.” John 10:17. That is, “My Father has so loved you that He even loves Me more for giving My life to redeem you. In becoming your Substitute and Surety, by surrendering My life, by taking your liabilities, your transgressions, I am endeared to My Father; for by My sacrifice, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.” {S.C page 13-14}

Love beyond Parallel

“None but the Son of God could accomplish our redemption; for only He who was in the bosom of the Father could declare Him. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it manifest. Nothing less than the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in behalf of fallen man could express the Father’s love to lost humanity.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He gave Him not only to live among men, to bear their sins, and die their sacrifice. He gave Him to the fallen race. Christ was to identify Himself with the interests and needs of humanity. He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is “not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father’s throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed--the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness.

The price paid for our redemption, the infinite sacrifice of our heavenly Father in giving His Son to die for us, should give us exalted conceptions of what we may become through Christ. As the inspired apostle John beheld the height, the depth, the breadth of the Father's love toward the perishing race, he was filled with adoration and reverence; and, failing to find suitable language in which to express the greatness and tenderness of this love, he called upon the world to behold it. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3:1. What a value this places upon man! Through transgression the sons of man become subjects of Satan. Through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ the sons of Adam may become the sons of God. By assuming human nature, Christ elevates humanity. Fallen men are placed where, through connection with Christ, they may indeed become worthy of the name "sons of God."

Such love is without a parallel. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! Theme for the most profound meditation! The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child." {S.C page 14-15}

CHAPTER 9

How It All Started

Before Creation

- Throughout the beginningless eternity past, the Godhead: God the Father, His Eternal and only Begotten Son and the Holy Spirit; lived the perfect infinite life.
- The Godhead possesses infinite power, infinite wisdom, infinite love.
- Infinite wisdom includes infinite righteousness and infinite truth.
- Infinite power is the source of and the basis of all existence, and is infinitely concentrated in God the Father.
- Infinite wisdom/righteousness, was beginninglessly begotten by infinite power
- Infinite wisdom/righteousness is embedded in the Son of God.
- Infinite power functions only through infinite wisdom to produce all that is perfectly good.
- The Father does all things through His Son.
- The mutual self-giving between the Father and the Son is infinite love, constituted in the Holy Spirit.

- Each person of the Godhead possesses the other **two in one** divine nature.
- The love of the Father for His Son and the Son for His Father is infinite, selfless, unconditional and unchanging and is their very spirit toward each other.

“God is love.” 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. “The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” whose “ways are everlasting,” changeth not. With Him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17. {PP 33.1}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. The psalmist says:

*“Strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand.
Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne:*

Mercy and truth go before Thy face.

*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound:
They walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance.*

*In Thy name do they rejoice all the day:
And in Thy righteousness are they exalted.
For Thou art the glory of their strength: . . .*

*For our shield belongeth unto Jehovah,
And our king to the Holy One.”*

Psa 89:13-18

{P.P page 33/ paragraph 1-2}

Creation

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate--a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The

everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Micah 5:2. And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting. . . . When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” Proverbs 8:22–30.

The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. “By Him were all things created, . . . whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.” Colossians 1:16. Angels are God’s ministers, radiant with the light ever flowing from His presence and speeding on rapid wing to execute His will. But the Son, the anointed of God, the “express image of His person,” “the brightness of His glory,” “upholding all things by the word of His power,” holds supremacy over them all. Hebrews 1:3. “A glorious high throne from the beginning,” was the place of His sanctuary (Jeremiah 17:12); “a scepter of righteousness,” the scepter of His kingdom. Hebrews 1:8. “Honor and majesty are before Him: strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.” Psalm 96:6. Mercy and truth go before His face. Psalm 89:14.” {P.P page 34/ paragraph 1-2}

Love: The Foundation of Heaven’s Constitution

“The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.

So long as all created beings acknowledged the allegiance of love, there was perfect harmony throughout the universe of God. It was the joy of the heavenly host to fulfill the purpose of their Creator. They delighted in reflecting His glory and showing forth His praise. And while love to God was supreme, love for one another was confiding and unselfish. There was no note of discord to mar the celestial harmonies.” {P.P page 34-5}

The Circuit of Beneficence

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. “I do nothing of

Myself,” said Christ; “the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.” “I seek not Mine own glory,” but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” {D.A page 21/ paragraph 2}

The Start of the Great Controversy

“But a change came over this happy state. There was one who perverted the freedom that God had granted to His creatures. Sin originated with him who, next to Christ, had been most honored of God and was highest in power and glory among the inhabitants of heaven. Lucifer, “son of the morning,” was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him. “Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” Ezekiel 28:12–15. {PP 35.1}

Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Ezekiel 28:17. “Thou hast said in thine heart, . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.” {P.P page 35}

The Law of Self-sacrificing Love Broken

In heaven itself this law was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men. He led them to doubt the word of God, and to distrust His goodness. Because God is a God of justice and terrible majesty, Satan caused them to look upon Him as severe and unforgiving. Thus he drew men to join him in rebellion against God, and the night of woe settled down upon the world. {D.A page 21}

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

“Though created innocent and holy, our first parents were not placed beyond the possibility of wrong-doing. God might have created them without the power to transgress His requirements, but in that case there could have been no development of character; their service would not have been voluntary, but forced. Therefore He gave them the power of choice--the power to yield or to withhold obedience. And before they could receive in fullness the blessings He desired to impart, their love and loyalty must be tested.

In the Garden of Eden was the “tree of knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat.” Genesis 2:9-17. It was the will of God that Adam and Eve should not know evil. The knowledge of good had been freely given them; but the knowledge of evil,--of sin and its results, of wearing toil, of anxious care, of disappointment and grief, of pain and death,--this was in love withheld.

While God was seeking man's good, Satan was seeking his ruin. When Eve, disregarding the Lord's admonition concerning the forbidden tree, ventured to approach it, she came in contact with her foe. Her interest and curiosity having been awakened, Satan proceeded to deny God's word, and to insinuate distrust of His wisdom and goodness. To the woman's statement concerning the tree of knowledge, “God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,” the tempter made answer, “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall

be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:3–5.

Satan desired to make it appear that this knowledge of good mingled with evil would be a blessing, and that in forbidding them to take of the fruit of the tree, God was withholding great good. He urged that it was because of its wonderful properties for imparting wisdom and power that God had forbidden them to taste it, that He was thus seeking to prevent them from reaching a nobler development and finding greater happiness. He declared that he himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech; and that if they also would eat of it, they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and enter a broader field of knowledge.

While Satan claimed to have received great good by eating of the forbidden tree, he did not let it appear that by transgression he had become an outcast from heaven. Here was falsehood, so concealed under a covering of apparent truth that Eve, infatuated, flattered, beguiled, did not discern the deception. She coveted what God had forbidden; she distrusted His wisdom. She cast away faith, the key of knowledge.

When Eve saw “that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.” It was grateful to the taste, and, as she ate, she seemed to feel a vivifying power, and imagined herself entering upon a higher state of existence. Having herself transgressed, she became a tempter to her husband, “and he did eat.” Genesis 3:6.

“Your eyes shall be opened,” the enemy had said; “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3:5. Their eyes were indeed opened; but how sad the opening! The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained. There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God’s goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error.

Man lost all because he chose to listen to the deceiver rather than to Him who is Truth, who alone has understanding. By the mingling of evil with good, his mind had become confused, his mental and spiritual powers benumbed. No

longer could he appreciate the good that God had so freely bestowed.

Adam and Eve had chosen the knowledge of evil, and if they ever regained the position they had lost they must regain it under the unfavorable conditions they had brought upon themselves. No longer were they to dwell in Eden, for in its perfection it could not teach them the lessons which it was now essential for them to learn. In unutterable sadness they bade farewell to their beautiful surroundings and went forth to dwell upon the earth, where rested the curse of sin.

To Adam God had said: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:17-19.

Although the earth was blighted with the curse, nature was still to be man's lesson book. It could not now represent goodness only; for evil was everywhere present, marring earth and sea and air with its defiling touch. Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin.

In drooping flower and falling leaf Adam and his companion witnessed the first signs of decay. Vividly was brought to their minds the stern fact that every living thing must die. Even the air, upon which their life depended, bore the seeds of death.

Continually they were reminded also of their lost dominion. Among the lower creatures Adam had stood as king, and so long as he remained loyal to God, all nature acknowledged his rule; but when he transgressed, this dominion was forfeited. The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation. Thus not only the life of man, but the nature of the beasts, the trees of the forest, the grass of the field, the very air he breathed, all told the sad lesson of the knowledge of evil.

But man was not abandoned to the results of the evil he had chosen. In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation of redemption. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," God said, "and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. This sentence, spoken in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. Before they heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil and sorrow that must be their portion, or of the dust to which they must return, they listened to words that could not fail of giving them hope. All that had been lost by yielding to Satan could be regained through Christ. {**Education chapter 3**}

"Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer." {**M.H page 113**}

"The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2." {**D.A page 22/ paragraph 1**}

Lessons from Evil

"This intimation also nature repeats to us. Though marred by sin, it speaks not only of creation but of redemption. Though the earth bears testimony to the curse in the evident signs of decay, it is still rich and beautiful in the tokens of life-giving power. The trees cast off their leaves, only to be robed with fresher verdure; the flowers die, to spring forth in new beauty; and in every manifestation of creative power is held out the assurance that we may be created anew in "righteousness and holiness of truth." Ephesians 4:24, margin. Thus the very objects and operations of nature that bring so vividly to mind our great loss become to us the messengers of hope. {Ed 27.2}

As far as evil extends, the voice of our Father is heard, bidding His children

see in its results the nature of sin, warning them to forsake the evil, and inviting them to receive the good.” {Education page 27/ paragraph 2-3}

So we should clearly understand that God is never the cause of evil. Evil results from Satan’s government of sin and the collective accumulation of wrong human and demonic choices down through history.

The Rebellion not to be Put Down by Force

“God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

It was God’s purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God’s principles. Time was given for the working of Satan’s principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe.” {D.A page 759/ paragraph 1-2}

No Coercion in Christ’s Kingdom

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. {1 John 4: 8} KJV

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. {1 John 4: 18} KJV

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. {John 18: 36} KJV

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; {2 Corinthians 10: 3-5} KJV

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. {Zechariah 4: 6} KJV

“Whereunto,” asked Christ, “shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?” Mark 4:30. He could not employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ’s kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished. This kingdom is to uplift and ennoble humanity. God’s church is the court of holy life, filled with varied gifts and endowed with the Holy Spirit. The members are to find their happiness in the happiness of those whom they help and bless.” {A.A page 12/ paragraph 2}

God’s Enemies Self-Destruct

God is not willing that anyone should perish.

He has done and is doing all He can to save all human beings.

But everyone has freedom of choice. Those who reject God and Christ will be separated from God by sin and be destroyed by sin.

God Destroys No Man

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. {James 1: 13-15} KJV

As righteousness [tendeth] to life: so he that pursueth evil [pursueth it] to his own death. {Prover 11: 19} KJV

“Every seed sown produces a harvest of its kind. So it is in human life. We all need to sow the seeds of compassion, sympathy, and love; for we shall reap what we sow. Every characteristic of selfishness, self-love, self-esteem, every act of self-indulgence, will bring forth a like harvest. He who lives for self is sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh he will reap corruption. {COL 84.3}

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself.

Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born, and the first-born of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow. {C.O.L page 84-5}

The Law of Sowing and Reaping

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. {Galatians 6: 7-9} KJV

"Would that I could make plain to your beclouded senses, my brethren, the great peril you are in. Every action, good or bad, prepares the way for its repetition. How was it in the case of Pharaoh? The statement in Holy Writ is that God hardened his heart, and at every repetition of light in the manifestation of God's power the statement is repeated. Every time he refused to submit to God's will his heart became harder and less impressible by the Spirit of God. He sowed the seed of obstinacy, and God left it to vegetate. He might have prevented it by a miracle, but that was not His plan. He allowed it to grow and produce a harvest of its own kind, thus, proving the truthfulness of the scripture: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." When a man plants doubts, he will reap doubts. By rejecting the first light and every following ray, Pharaoh went from one degree of hardness of heart to another, until the cold, dead forms of the first-born only checked his unbelief and obstinacy for a moment. And then, determined not to yield to God's way, he continued his willful course until overwhelmed by the waters of the Red Sea.

This case is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light and walk

promptly in its rays. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings of the Spirit of God, his conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle!" {5T page 119}

CHAPTER 10

The Mystery - Unfolding Cross

God Not Responsible for Sin

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. {James 1: 13-15} KJV

The LORD [is] righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. {Psalms 145: 17} KJV

[Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, [and] holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth [the man that is] more righteous than he? {Habakkuk 1: 13} KJV

“To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God’s word and essential to salvation. There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor

to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties; and such as are actuated by a disposition to doubt and cavil seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.” {G.C page 492/ paragraph 1}

“It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is “the transgression of the law;” it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.” {G.C page 492-3/ paragraph 2}

“No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God.” {5T page 173-4}

“Thus the archfiend clothes with his own attributes the Creator and Benefactor of mankind. Cruelty is satanic. God is love; and all that He created was pure, holy, and lovely, until sin was brought in by the first great rebel. Satan himself

is the enemy who tempts man to sin, and then destroys him if he can; and when he has made sure of his victim, then he exults in the ruin he has wrought. If permitted, he would sweep the entire race into his net. Were it not for the interposition of divine power, not one son or daughter of Adam would escape.

Satan is seeking to overcome men today, as he overcame our first parents, by shaking their confidence in their Creator and leading them to doubt the wisdom of His government and the justice of His laws. Satan and his emissaries represent God as even worse than themselves, in order to justify their own malignity and rebellion. The great deceiver endeavors to shift his own horrible cruelty of character upon our heavenly Father, that he may cause himself to appear as one greatly wronged by his expulsion from heaven because he would not submit to so unjust a governor. He presents before the world the liberty which they may enjoy under his mild sway, in contrast with the bondage imposed by the stern decrees of Jehovah. Thus he succeeds in luring souls away from their allegiance to God.” {G.C page 534-5}

“When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels.” {G.C page 536}

The Light that Streams from Calvary

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. {Galatians 6: 14} KJV

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. {1 Corinthians 2:2} KJV

“The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, “Our Father.”

It will be seen that He who is infinite in wisdom could devise no plan for our salvation except the sacrifice of His Son. The compensation for this sacrifice is the joy of peopling the earth with ransomed beings, holy, happy, and immortal. The result of the Saviour's conflict with the powers of darkness is joy to the redeemed, redounding to the glory of God throughout eternity. And such is the value of the soul that the Father is satisfied with the price paid; and Christ Himself, beholding the fruits of His great sacrifice, is satisfied."{G.C page 652}

Christ Our Substitute and Surety

[There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was

made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected [the same] in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only [they], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, [to wit], the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it]. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. {Romans 8: 1-39} KJV

The Death of Christ was exactly as the Death of the Sinner Will Be

“The death of Christ was to be the convincing, everlasting argument that the law of God is as unchangeable as His throne. The agonies of the Garden of

Gethsemane, the insult, the mockery, and abuse heaped upon God's dear Son, the horrors and ignominy of the crucifixion, furnish sufficient and thrilling demonstration that God's justice, when it punishes, does the work thoroughly. The fact that His own Son, the Surety for man, was not spared, is an argument that will stand to all eternity before saint and sinner, before the universe of God, to testify that He will not excuse the transgressor of His law. Every offense against God's law, however minute, is set down in the reckoning, and when the sword of justice is taken in hand, it will do the work for impenitent transgressors that was done to the divine Sufferer. Justice will strike; for God's hatred of sin is intense and overwhelming (MS 58, 1897).” {3 B.C page 1166}

Christ, the Sin Bearer

“Man has not been made a sin-bearer, and he will never know the horror of the curse of sin which the Saviour bore. No sorrow can bear any comparison with the sorrow of Him upon whom the wrath of God fell with overwhelming force. Human nature can endure but a limited amount of test and trial. The finite can only endure the finite measure, and human nature succumbs; but the nature of Christ had a greater capacity for suffering; for the human existed in the divine nature, and created a capacity for suffering to endure that which resulted from the sins of a lost world. The agony which Christ endured, broadens, deepens, and gives a more extended conception of the character of sin, and the character of the retribution which God will bring upon those who continue in sin. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ to the repenting, believing sinner (MS 35, 1895).” {5 B.C page 1103}

A Fearful Thing!

“It is a fearful thing for the unrepenting sinner to fall into the hands of the living God. This is proved by the history of the destruction of the old world by a flood, by the record of the fire which fell from heaven and destroyed the inhabitants of Sodom. But never was this proved to so great an extent as in the agony of Christ, the Son of the infinite God, when He bore the wrath of God for a sinful world.” {5 B.C page 1103}

How Jesus Died

“But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony. They saw their Lord enclosed by legions of satanic forces, His nature weighed down with a shuddering, mysterious dread. There was silence in heaven. No harp was

touched. Could mortals have viewed the amazement of the angelic host as in silent grief they watched the Father separating His beams of light, love, and glory from His beloved Son, they would better understand how offensive in His sight is sin.” {D.A page 693}

How Jesus Died

“Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father’s mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father’s reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father’s wrath upon Him as man’s substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.

With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour’s despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. “There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.” There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed. And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son. All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As the face of Cain expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence,—the image of God. But His accusers would not give heed to the signet of heaven. Through long hours of agony Christ had been gazed upon by the jeering multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God.

The silence of the grave seemed to have fallen upon Calvary. A nameless terror held the throng that was gathered about the cross. The cursing and reviling ceased in the midst of half-uttered sentences. Men, women, and children fell prostrate upon the earth. Vivid lightnings occasionally flashed forth from the cloud, and revealed the cross and the crucified Redeemer. Priests, rulers, scribes, executioners, and the mob, all thought that their time of retribution had come. After a while some whispered that Jesus would now come down from the cross. Some attempted to grope their way back to the city, beating their breasts and wailing in fear.

At the ninth hour the darkness lifted from the people, but still enveloped the Saviour. It was a symbol of the agony and horror that weighed upon His heart. No eye could pierce the gloom that surrounded the cross, and none could penetrate the deeper gloom that enshrouded the suffering soul of Christ. The angry lightnings seemed to be hurled at Him as He hung upon the cross. Then "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" As the outer gloom settled about the Saviour, many voices exclaimed: The vengeance of heaven is upon Him. The bolts of God's wrath are hurled at Him, because He claimed to be the Son of God. Many who believed on Him heard His despairing cry. Hope left them. If God had forsaken Jesus, in what could His followers trust?" {D.A page 753-4}

“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured--the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face--speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life,--offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself.” {D.A page 755-6}

Satan’s Character Exposed

Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. {John 8: 44} KJV

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. {Hebrews 2: 14-15} KJV

“Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion.” {D.A page 758/ paragraph 3}

Satan Showed Himself a Murderer

“Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed. Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.

Yet Satan was not then destroyed. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.” {D.A page 761/ paragraph 1-3}

Jesus, by His Death, Defeated Satan

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. {1 John 3:8} KJV

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; {Hebrews 2: 14} KJV

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. {Revelation 1: 17-18} KJV

“Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, “It is finished.” John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost.” {D.A page 758/ paragraph 1}

Therefore the End Will Come

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy [that] shall be destroyed [is] death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under [him, it is] manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. {1 Corinthians 15: 25-28}
KJV

“Then the end will come. God will vindicate His law and deliver His people. Satan and all who have joined him in rebellion will be cut off. Sin and sinners will perish, root and branch, (Malachi 4:1),--Satan the root, and his followers the branches. The word will be fulfilled to the prince of evil, “Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; . . . I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. . . . Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” Then “the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be;” “they shall be as though they had not been.” Ezekiel 28:6-19; Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16.” {D.A page 763/ paragraph 4}

Final Destruction Not Arbitrary

“This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is “alienated from the life of God.” Christ says, “All they that hate Me love death.” Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.” {D.A page 764/ paragraph 1}

How Does God’s Glory Consume?

“In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Colossians 2:3. But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony

with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there --every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love --would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the center of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them." {S.C page 17-18}

In the End it will be Understood

"But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {D.A page 764}

CHAPTER 11

The Character of God – An All-Important Theme

God invites us to Know Him

What does it mean to know God? How vitally important is such knowledge? *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise [man] glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty [man] glory in his might, let not the rich [man] glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I [am] the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these [things] I delight, saith the LORD. {Jeremiah 9: 23-24} KJV*

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. {John 17:3} KJV

“The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that works transformation of character. This knowledge, received, will re-create the soul in the image of God. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine.” {8T page 289}

The Knowledge of God

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the

knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: {2 Peter 1: 1-3} KJV

“No man, without divine aid, can attain to this knowledge of God. The apostle says that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” Christ “was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” Jesus declared to His disciples: “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” In that last prayer for His followers, before entering the shadows of Gethsemane, the Saviour lifted His eyes to heaven, and in pity for the ignorance of fallen men He said: “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee.” “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.”

From the beginning it has been Satan’s studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will.

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness. And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God,” they “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

At times Satan’s contest for the control of the human family appeared to be crowned with success. During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he

ruled with a terrible power as though through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. Even the covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself, had so far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character.

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God." {5T page737-9}

Away with Meager Views

"The meager views which so many have had of the exalted character and office of Christ have narrowed their religious experience and have greatly hindered their progress in the divine life. Personal religion among us as a people is at a low ebb. There is much form, much machinery, much tongue religion; but something deeper and more solid must be brought into our religious experience. With all our facilities, our publishing houses, our schools, our sanitariums, and many, many other advantages, we ought to be far in advance of our present position. It is the work of the Christian in this life to represent Christ to the world, in life and character unfolding the blessed Jesus. If God has given us light, it is that we may reveal it to others. But in comparison with the light we have received, and the opportunities and privileges granted us to reach the hearts of the people, the results of our work thus far have been far too small. God designs that the truth which He has brought to our understanding shall produce more fruit than has yet been revealed. But when our minds are filled with gloom and sadness, dwelling upon the darkness and evil around us, how can we represent Christ to the world? How can our testimony have power to win souls? What we need is to know God and the power of His love, as revealed in Christ, by an experimental knowledge. We must search the Scriptures diligently,

prayerfully; our understanding must be quickened by the Holy Spirit, and our hearts must be uplifted to God in faith and hope and continual praise.

Through the merits of Christ, through His righteousness, which by faith is imputed unto us, we are to attain to the perfection of Christian character. Our daily and hourly work is set forth in the words of the apostle: "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." While doing this our minds become clearer and our faith stronger, and our hope is confirmed; we are so engrossed with the view of His purity and loveliness, and the sacrifice He has made to bring us into agreement with God, that we have no disposition to speak of doubts and discouragements." {5T page 743-4}

Satan's Constant Effort is to Blacken God's Character

"It is Satan's constant effort to misrepresent the character of God, the nature of sin, and the real issues at stake in the great controversy. His sophistry lessens the obligation of the divine law and gives men license to sin. At the same time he causes them to cherish false conceptions of God so that they regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love. The cruelty inherent in his own character is attributed to the Creator; it is embodied in systems of religion and expressed in modes of worship. Thus the minds of men are blinded, and Satan secures them as his agents to war against God. By perverted conceptions of the divine attributes, heathen nations were led to believe human sacrifices necessary to secure the favor of Deity; and horrible cruelties have been perpetrated under the various forms of idolatry." {G.C page 569/ paragraph 1}

Faith and Our Picture of God

The most important component of our faith is our mental picture of God. When someone asks you what you think about God, you may recite all the orthodox terminology while entertaining deep down a mental picture of God that is unloving and severely limited.

Yet it is our actual mental picture of God, not our theoretical knowledge about God, but our deepest innermost picture of God which determines how we feel about God.

It is impossible to enjoy a genuinely passionate, loving relationship with God when our mental picture of Him does not inspire passion.

One's Picture of God and One's Acceptance of the New Covenant

“At the Kansas meeting my prayer to God was, that the power of the enemy might be broken, and that the people who had been in darkness might open their hearts and minds to the message that God should send them, that they might see the truth, new to many minds, as old truth in new frame-work. The understanding of the people of God has been blinded; for Satan has misrepresented the character of God. Our good and gracious Lord has been presented before the people clothed in the attributes of Satan, and men and women who have been seeking for truth, have so long regarded God in a false light that it is difficult to dispel the cloud that obscures his glory from their view. Many have been living in an atmosphere of doubt, and it seems almost impossible for them to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel of Christ.” {R.H July, 1889}

Similarly, after the Egyptian bondage, the Israelites “had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant” and formed the old covenant at Sinai. (See P.P page 371/ chapter 32)

Sin Becomes Hateful when we Appreciate God’s Character

“The Lord is disappointed when His people place a low estimate upon themselves. He desires His chosen heritage to value themselves according to the price He has placed upon them. God wanted them, else He would not have sent His Son on such an expensive errand to redeem them. He has a use for them, and He is well pleased when they make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect large things if they have faith in His promises. {DA 668.1}

But to pray in Christ’s name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour’s promise is given on condition. “If ye love Me,” He says, “keep My commandments.” He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience.

Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.” {D.A page 668/ paragraph 1-3}

God a Tender Father

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). {FW 35.1}

God requires that we confess our sins and humble our hearts before Him; but at the same time we should have confidence in Him as a tender Father, who will not forsake those who put their trust in Him. Many of us walk by sight and not by faith. We believe the things that are seen but do not appreciate the precious promises given us in God’s Word; and yet we cannot dishonor God more decidedly than by showing that we distrust what He says and question whether the Lord is in earnest with us or is deceiving us.

God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes and grieve His Spirit, but when we repent and come to Him with contrite hearts, He will not turn us away. There are hindrances to be removed. Wrong feelings have been cherished, and there have been pride, self-sufficiency, impatience, and murmurings. All these separate us from God. Sins must be confessed; there must be a deeper work of grace in the heart. Those who feel weak and discouraged may become strong men of God and do noble work for the Master. But they must work from a high standpoint; they must be influenced by no selfish motives.” {F.W page 35/ chapter 3}

Merits of Christ our Only Hope

“We must learn in the school of Christ. Nothing but His righteousness can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. We have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings but have not received them because we have cherished the idea that we could do something to make ourselves worthy of them. We have not looked away from ourselves, believing that Jesus is a living Saviour. We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. Through His prophet the Lord promises, “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” (Isaiah 55:7). We must believe the naked promise, and not accept feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as

a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.

We look to self, as though we had power to save ourselves; but Jesus died for us because we are helpless to do this. In Him is our hope, our justification, our righteousness. We should not despond and fear that we have no Saviour or that He has no thoughts of mercy toward us. At this very time He is carrying on His work in our behalf, inviting us to come to Him in our helplessness and be saved. We dishonor Him by our unbelief. It is astonishing how we treat our very best Friend, how little confidence we repose in Him who is able to save to the uttermost and who has given us every evidence of His great love.

My brethren, are you expecting that your merit will recommend you to the favor of God, thinking that you must be free from sin before you trust His power to save? If this is the struggle going on in your mind, I fear you will gain no strength and will finally become discouraged.”{F.W page 36/ paragraph 1-3}

Look and Live

“In the wilderness, when the Lord permitted poisonous serpents to sting the rebellious Israelites, Moses was directed to lift up a brazen serpent and bid all the wounded look to it and live. But many saw no help in this Heaven-appointed remedy. The dead and dying were all around them, and they knew without divine help their fate was certain; but they would lament their wounds, their pains, their sure death, until their strength was gone, and their eyes were glazed, when they might have had instant healing.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” even so was “the Son of man . . . lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15). If you are conscious of your sins, do not devote all your powers to mourning over them, but look and live. Jesus is our only Saviour; and although millions who need to be healed will reject His offered mercy, not one who trusts in His merits will be left to perish. While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we must not be discouraged; we must rely upon a crucified and risen Saviour. Poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul, look and live. Jesus has pledged His word; He will save all who come unto Him.

Come to Jesus, and receive rest and peace. You may have the blessing even now. Satan suggests that you are helpless and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before him: “I have a risen Saviour. In Him I trust,

and He will never suffer me to be confounded. In His name I triumph. He is my righteousness and my crown of rejoicing.” Let no one here feel that his case is hopeless, for it is not. You may see that you are sinful and undone, but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled, for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us. {F.W page 37-8/ paragraph 1-3}

Claiming God’s Promises

Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to Him, relying upon Him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. While they think they are committing themselves to God, there is a great deal of self-dependence. There are conscientious souls that trust partly to God and partly to themselves. They do not look to God, to be kept by His power, but depend upon watchfulness against temptation and the performance of certain duties for acceptance with Him. There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.

There is need of constant watchfulness and of earnest, loving devotion, but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves or to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light. {FW page 38/ paragraph 3-4}

CHAPTER 12

The Character of God & the Final Crisis

The Seal and the Mark

- Bible prophecy predicts a sealing and a marking in the end-time.
- God will seal His living remnant.
- Satan will mark his living end-time followers.
- God's sealing means the full reproduction of His character in His remnant.
- Satan's marking means the full development of his satanic character in his followers.
- There will be no neutral ground!

The Father's Name

- The sealed remnant is described as having the Lamb's Father's name in their foreheads.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty [and] four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. {Revelation 14: 1} KJV

- The Father's name indicates the Father's character.
- Jesus came to manifest His Father's name: to reveal His character and that He did victoriously.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. {John 17: 4} KJV

Jesus' Prayer

- The sealed remnant will be the fulfillment of our Saviour's prayer.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. {John 17: 23} KJV

- This indicates a very close intimate agape love relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- This requires intellect and experiential knowledge of God, His government and His ways.

A Right Concept of God's Character

- "Those who endeavor to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them." {G.C page 593}
- The sealing is receiving intellectually and experientially the right understanding of God's character, government and purposes and acting in harmony with them.
- This is critical because we are told:-

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. {Mark 4: 26-29} KJV

- *“There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ--the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others--you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.*

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Galatians 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life.

“When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” {C.O.L page 67-9}

God's Character and the Loud Cry

- Therefore the presentation of the truth of God's character will be an integral part of the final gospel “Loud Cry” message.
- The light of God's character and the true full everlasting gospel will lighten the whole earth.

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. {Revelation 18: 1} KJV

- *“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth.*

This is the work outlined by the prophet Isaiah in the words, "O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." Isaiah 40:9,10.

Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them." {C.O.L page 415-6}

- In contrast to this knowledge of God in His remnant, there will be Satan's people who will sentence God's people to death because they, Satan's people, will not know the Father or His Son.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. {John 16: 1-3} KJV

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. {Revelation 13: 15} KJV

- There will be but two classes.
- One class with the true knowledge of God's character and that character fully reproduced in them, the sealed remnant.
- The other class without the true knowledge of God's character and with Satan's character fully reproduced in them, those with the mark of the beast.

The Seven Last Plagues

- The mark of the beast world system, with its enforced Sunday legislation and persecution of God's people, will progressively separate the world from God's protection.
- This separation will cause the 7 last plagues.

- This means that the “wrath” “threatened” under the third angel’s cry message must be carefully explained to the world.
- In the third angel’s message, God is not saying: Obey me or I will smite you with wrath and plagues and kill you. In fact God is saying accept my truth and love and salvation and be protected from sin’s destructive malignity.

God’s Character and the Sabbath

- The most important truth about God is love.
- Agape love is the unchanging principle in the Godhead whereby God’s power is always unchangingly used in wisdom and righteousness to produce only good.
- Power must be completely (7) covered with righteousness.
- The righteous use of power produces order, peace and rest.
- This is the meaning of the creation Sabbath.
- At the end of creation week, the whole creation on earth was in perfect harmony with the creator.
- All created powers were covered with righteousness by love.
- All things hold together in Christ who is the righteousness of God. Sin separated the creation from Christ and produced unrest.
- The plan of redemption in Christ restores this rest.

Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {Matthew 11: 28} KJV

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left [us] of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard [it]. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh [day] on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. {Hebrews 4: 1-4} KJV

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God [did] from his. {Hebrews 4: 9-10} KJV

- The seventh day Sabbath is central to the character of God truth.
- God's government produces rest because God's love uses power righteously to produce only good.
- Satan's government produces unrest because selfishness uses power unrighteously to produce unrest.
- Therefore whereas the seventh day Sabbath is the external sign of the seal of God, the first day of the week is the external sign of the mark of the beast.

The Time of Trouble

"The path to freedom from sin is through crucifixion of self, and conflict with the powers of darkness. Let none be discouraged in view of the severe trials to be met in the time of Jacob's trouble, which is yet before them. They are to work earnestly, anxiously, not for that time, but for today. What we want is to have a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ now, and a personal experience now. In these precious closing hours of probation, we have a deep and living experience to gain. We shall thus form characters that will insure our deliverance in the time of trouble. {RH, August 12, 1884 par. 10}

The time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christ-like characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations. The last conflict will reveal Satan to them in his true character, that of a cruel tyrant, and it will do for them what nothing else could do, up-root him entirely from their affections. For to love and cherish sin, is to love and cherish its author, that deadly foe of Christ. When they excuse sin and cling to perversity of character, they give Satan a place in their affections, and pay him homage." {R.H August 12, 1884}

Full and Final Display

"To His church, Christ has given ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the

wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to appear in full and final display. The declaration in His intercessory prayer, that the Father's love is as great toward us as toward Himself, the only-begotten Son, and that we shall be with Him where He is, forever one with Christ and the Father, is a marvel to the heavenly host, and it is their great joy. The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full, and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against. In their untainted purity and spotless perfection, Christ looks upon His people as the reward of all His suffering, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory--Christ, the great center from which radiates all glory. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." {T.M page 18}



CHAPTER 13

Love, Freedom & Choice

- God created the universe out of (agape) love and for the purpose of love.
- Therefore, He created free intelligences, free moral agents, because there can be no love without freedom of choice.
- In order to choose to love, a person must be capable of choosing not to love.
- There can be no love without risk.
- There can be no freedom without risk.
- God always intended to run the universe by love and not by force.

Universe by Love and not by Force

- Lucifer in Heaven was the first creature to choose to reject God's love and God's government of love, truth and righteousness.
- He not only rejected God's government of love but he falsified God's character.
- One third of the angels joined Satan in his war against God.
- Satan brought his rebellion to earth.

- Adam, the first representative man, chose Satan's government and rejected God's government.
- Sin is the transgression of God's law of love.
- Sin is a principle at war with the principle of self-sacrificing love which is the foundation of God's government.
- *All who follow Christ will wear the crown of sacrifice. They will surely be misunderstood by selfish men, and will be made a mark for the fierce assaults of Satan. It is this principle of self-sacrifice that his kingdom is established to destroy, and he will war against it wherever manifested.* {D.A page 223}
- Our world became a war zone.
- Satan, his fallen angels and humans are all at war with the Godhead and God's government of love.
- Sin separates the created powers in our world from God's wisdom and righteousness.
- Power separated from righteousness is perverted power or wrath.
- The complexity of the creation is beyond our intellectual capacity, even though we have come to understand a lot more than we did before.
- The ongoing sinful choices of Satan, his demons and sinful humans have had and are having an exponentially cumulative effect, producing more and more evil.
- People usually ask why God does not prevent the increasing wickedness and evil.
- We all need to understand two important facts.

Two Important Facts

Firstly: Freedom is Irrevocable

- God made us free and the freedom is irrevocable. This means that God cannot rightly remove freedom from a man who is choosing to gun-down other people.
- If God were to take away our freedom each time we choose to do



wrong that would be equivalent to making us robots.

- Since, therefore, God has decided to make us free; our freedom is genuine and irrevocable.
- Moreover, we are morally responsible for our choices. This means that freedom carries a serious and massive responsibility.

Secondly: There is Immutability of Law

- God's righteousness which is expressed in the ten commandment moral law is immutable.
- In addition, there are laws governing the structure and function of the universe including the laws of nature on our planet.
- These laws must be consistent, stable and constant otherwise there would occur such chaos in the natural world that life could not survive.
- For creatures to be free and relate lovingly to each other requires an orderly and predictable environment where the laws of creation are reliably consistent and predictable.

Freedom and Law (continued)

- Each creature in freedom and love can influence the environment without monopolizing it so as to allow relationships and interactions of order and peace.
- God neither takes away creature freedom nor arbitrarily changes natural laws.
- For example: if a person is about to fall from a high building, God is not going to suspend the law of gravity to prevent that person from falling.
- If God did that, not only would chaos develop but creatures would not learn to make wise choices within the constraint of the laws of their biological nature and the law of nature around them.
- Remember, sin is the unrighteous use of any power!



Winds of Strife

- Since sin separates any given power from its appropriate righteousness, our world under sin is a mass of perverted powers all poised to explode in destruction.
- All that God can do is to restrain, or hold in check, these forces of evil called “winds of strife”.

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. {Revelation 7: 1} KJV

- The principles involved in the mechanisms of restraint of evil forces are also very complex and beyond our complete understanding.
- When those “winds” are let go by sin’s separation from God, the result will be destruction.

A noise shall come [even] to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them [that are] wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. {Jeremiah 25: 31-33} KJV

- We are able to survive in the hostile environment of a sinful world only because of God’s, mercy.

[It is of] the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. [They are] new every morning: great [is] thy faithfulness. The LORD [is] my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. {Lamentations 3: 22-24} KJV

- In other words, far from causing the terrible evils in our world, God is busy restraining the forces of a sin- damaged creation in order to allow survival.

“We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind

from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty. {GC 36.1}

The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law. Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplation. Terrible have been the results of rejecting the authority of Heaven. But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future. The records of the past,—the long procession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions, the "battle of the warrior . . . with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (Isaiah 9:5),—what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule." {G.C page 36-7}

Before sin all things were held together in Christ, the logos or word or wisdom of God. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. {Colossians 1: 16-17} KJV

In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. {Colossians 2:3} KJV

- Sin produced a fracture, separating our world and solar system from Christ
- The apostle Paul informs us that God will in due course gather together again all things in Christ.

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him: {Ephesians 1: 10} KJV

- Satan's government of sin is the source of all violence, murder, and falsehood.
- Speaking about Lucifer, Ezekiel says:

Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. {Ezekiel 28: 15-16} KJV

- And Jesus says:

Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. {John 8: 44} KJV

- The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan is not about who has the greater power. It is about who is right.
- When we see the all-powerful creator being crucified by His creatures there can be no doubt that His creatures are free. Neither can there be any doubt that the creator is love.
- This agape love is absolutely selfless (unselfish), all-for-the-other-none for –self, unconditional, unchanging love.



What shall we then say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. {Romans 8: 31-39} KJV

Agape love is described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; Love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; Love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail. Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. {1 Corinthians 13: 4-8} GNB

God's agape love has given us full and free salvation in Christ. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only [so], but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. {Romans 5: 8-11} KJV*

And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray

[you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. {2 Corinthians 5: 18-21} KJV

"By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Romans 5:18.

Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot grasp it, power cannot command it; but to all who will accept it, God's glorious grace is freely given. But men may feel their need, and, renouncing all self-dependence, accept salvation as a gift. Those who enter heaven will not scale its walls by their own righteousness, nor will its gates be opened to them for costly offerings of gold or silver, but they will gain an entrance to the many mansions of the Father's house through the merits of the cross of Christ.

For sinful men, the highest consolation, the greatest cause of rejoicing, is that Heaven has given Jesus to be the sinner's Saviour. . . . He offered to go over the ground where Adam stumbled and fell; to meet the tempter on the field of battle, and conquer him in man's behalf. Behold Him in the wilderness of temptation. Forty days and forty nights He fasted, enduring the fiercest assaults of the powers of darkness. He trod the "winepress alone; and of the people there was none with" Him (Isaiah 63:3). It was not for Himself, but that He might break the chain that held the human race in slavery to Satan.

As Christ in His humanity sought strength from His Father, that He might be enabled to endure trial and temptation, so are we to do. We are to follow the example of the sinless Son of God. Daily we need help and grace and power from the Source of all power. We are to cast our helpless souls upon the One who is ready to help us in every time of need. Too often we forget the Lord. Self gives way to impulse, and we lose the victories that we should gain.

If we are overcome let us not delay to repent, and to accept the pardon that will place us on vantage ground. If we repent and believe, the cleansing power from God will be ours. His saving grace is freely offered. His pardon is given to all who will receive it. . . . Over every sinner that repents the angels of God rejoice with songs of joy. Not one sinner need be lost. Full and free is the gift of saving grace. {O.F.C page 210/ August 15th}

Christ Suffered Full Wrath for us

“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5.

Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God; they suppose that, while the wrath of God was felt by His dear Son, He had, through all His painful sufferings, the evidence of His Father’s love and acceptance; that the portals of the tomb before Him were illuminated with bright hope, and that He had the abiding evidence of His future glory. Here is a great mistake. Christ’s keenest anguish was a sense of His Father’s displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

With many the story of the condescension, humiliation, and sacrifice of our divine Lord awakens no deeper interest . . . than does the history of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures; others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God’s dear Son differ from these? . . . If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then His death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs. But bodily pain was but a small part of the agony of God’s dear Son. The sins of the world were upon Him, also the sense of His Father’s wrath as He suffered the penalty of the law transgressed. It was these that crushed His divine soul. . . . The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. He was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. . . . It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of His Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding Him, the sins of the world upon Him, that the words were wrenched from His lips: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

In comparison with the enterprise of everlasting life, every other sinks into insignificance.” {O.F.C page 209/ August 14th}

- The cross explains what wrath is. The flood, the destruction of Jerusalem were all examples of wrath.
- Therefore all those destructions were caused by sin’s separation from God.

O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, [and] they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken

the LORD, the fountain of living waters. **{Jeremiah 17: 13} KJV**

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. **{James 1: 13-15} KJV**

- Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus as the Father's full and definitive revelation of Himself.
- Whatever does not reflect the transcendent love and beauty of character revealed at the cross is the result of sin and evil.
- Whatever does not harmonize with God's revelation of His character through Christ must be the result of choices that are not in line with God's will.
- God is preparing a remnant who will fully reflect His love and character to the end-time world.
- But even here, there is freedom and therefore risk on God's part.
- The Third Angel's movement has long delayed the final events by Laodicean lukewarmness.
- But Jesus waits in love for His people to receive His love and respond fully to His love.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and



will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. {Revelation 3: 14-22} KJV

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

The uplifted Saviour is to appear in His efficacious work as the Lamb slain, sitting upon the throne, to dispense the priceless covenant blessings, the benefits He died to purchase for every soul who should believe on Him. John could not express that love in words; it was too deep, too broad; he calls upon the human family to behold it. Christ is pleading for the church in the heavenly courts above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own lifeblood. Centuries, ages, can never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice. The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.

The efficacy of the blood of Christ was to be presented to the people with freshness and power, that their faith might lay hold upon its merits. As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat, while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ’s atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour’s character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are ever to bear in mind that there is One that can take away sin and save the sinner. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. This faith is the life of the church. As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness

by Moses, and all that had been bitten by the fiery serpents were bidden to look and live, so also the Son of man must be lifted up, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {T.M page 91-3}



CHAPTER 14

What Amazing Love

Love Takes the Risk

“The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Romans 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour’s sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life’s peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss.

The heart of the human father yearns over his son. He looks into the face of his little child, and trembles at the thought of life's peril. He longs to shield his dear one from Satan's power, to hold him back from temptation and conflict. To meet a bitterer conflict and a more fearful risk, God gave His only-begotten Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. "Herein is love." Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth!" {D.A page 48-9}

"Satan had pointed to Adam's sin as proof that God's law was unjust, and could not be obeyed. In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.

Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam's position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured." {D.A page 117/ paragraph 1-2}

Love is Satisfied in the End

"In this life we can only begin to understand the wonderful theme of redemption. With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance. The length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of redeeming love are but dimly comprehended. The plan of redemption will not be fully understood, even when the ransomed see as they are seen and know as they are known; but through the eternal ages new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and delighted mind. Though the griefs and pains and temptations of earth are ended and the cause removed, the people of God will ever have a distinct, intelligent knowledge of what their salvation has cost.

The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore--humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. As the nations of the saved look upon their Redeemer and behold the eternal glory of the Father shining in His countenance; as they behold His throne, which is from everlasting to everlasting, and know that His kingdom is to have no end, they break forth in rapturous song: "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood!"

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive. Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. While we behold the majesty of His throne, high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations, and comprehend, as never before, the significance of that endearing title, "Our Father."

It will be seen that He who is infinite in wisdom could devise no plan for our salvation except the sacrifice of His Son. The compensation for this sacrifice is the joy of peopling the earth with ransomed beings, holy, happy, and immortal. The result of the Saviour's conflict with the powers of darkness is joy to the redeemed, redounding to the glory of God throughout eternity. And such is the value of the soul that the Father is satisfied with the price paid; and Christ Himself, beholding the fruits of His great sacrifice, is satisfied." {G.C page 651-2}

"All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar--worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. They share the treasures of knowledge and understanding gained through ages upon ages in contemplation of God's handiwork. With undimmed vision they gaze

upon the glory of creation--suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity. Upon all things, from the least to the greatest, the Creator's name is written, and in all are the riches of His power displayed.

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 5:13.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love." {GC 678.2}

Christ Glorified

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. As Thou has given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

This is a plain statement of the pre-existence of Christ. Had He not had an existence before He assumed human nature, how could He possess glory with the Father before the world was? This is a grand theme for all to contemplate

who are searching for truth. The Holy Spirit will be beside all such, to present to them the glory of this wonderful truth. O, that the human mind might be strengthened that it might comprehend the glory of the Redeemer!

Christ is not praying for the manifestation of the glory of human nature; for that human nature never had an existence in His pre-existence. He is praying to His Father in regard to a glory possessed in His oneness with God. His prayer is that of a mediator; the favor He entreats is the manifestation of that divine glory which was possessed by Him when He was one with God. Let the veil be removed, He says, and let My glory shine forth,—the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

Christ defines the manner in which He has glorified the Father: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy Word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee."

How did the Father answer Christ's prayer?

For a period of time Christ was on probation. He took humanity on Himself, to stand the test and trial which the first Adam failed to endure. Had He failed in His test and trial, He would have been disobedient to the voice of God, and the world would have been lost.

Satan has asserted that men could not keep the commandments of God. To prove that they could, Christ became a man, and lived a life of perfect obedience, an evidence to sinful human beings, to the worlds unfallen, and to the heavenly angels, that man could keep God's law through the divine power that is abundantly provided for all that believe. In order to reveal God to the world, to demonstrate as true that which Satan has denied, Christ volunteered to take humanity, and in His power, humanity can obey God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." All heaven is Christ's to give to the world.

Christ emptied Himself of His honored position in the heavenly courts. He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was, as we are, subject to the enemy's temptations. Satan exulted when Christ became a human being, and he compassed His path with every conceivable temptation. Human weakness and tears were His portion; but He sought unto God, praying with His whole soul,

with strong crying and tears; and He was heard in that He feared. The subtlety of the enemy could not ensnare Him while He made God His trust, and was obedient to His words. "The prince of this world cometh," He said, "and hath nothing in Me." He can find nothing in Me which responds to his sophistry.

Amid impurity, Christ maintained His purity. Satan could not stain or corrupt it. His character revealed a perfect hatred for sin. It was His holiness that stirred against Him all the passion of a profligate world; for by His perfect life He threw upon the world a perpetual reproach, and made manifest the contrast between transgression and the pure, spotless righteousness of One that knew no sin. This heavenly purity annoyed the apostate foe as nothing else could do, and he followed Christ day by day, using in his work the people that claimed to have a superior purity and knowledge of God, putting into their hearts a spirit of hatred against Christ, and tempting His disciples to betray and forsake Him.

Christ was buffeted with temptations, and convulsed with agony. He was lacerated with stripes, crowned with thorns, and crucified. The fallen foe, once exalted to heaven, bruised Christ's heel, but this was all he could do. While engaged in doing despite to Christ, his head was being bruised. While enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself, Christ was filled with sorrow and anguish. This was represented as the bruising of His heel. A pain, heavier than ever oppressed another, was weighing down His humanity.

But although Christ's divine glory was for a time veiled and eclipsed by His assuming humanity, yet He did not cease to be God when He became man. The human did not take the place of the divine, nor the divine of the human. This is the mystery of godliness. The two expressions human and divine were, in Christ, closely and inseparably one, and yet they had a distinct individuality. Though Christ humbled Himself to become man, the Godhead was still His own. His Deity could not be lost while He stood faithful and true to His loyalty. Surrounded with sorrow, suffering, and moral pollution, despised and rejected by the people to whom had been intrusted the oracles of heaven, Jesus could yet speak of Himself as the Son of man in heaven. He was ready to take once more His divine glory when His work on earth was done.

There were occasions when Jesus stood forth while in human flesh as the Son of God. Divinity flashed through humanity, and was seen by the scoffing priests and rulers. Was it acknowledged? Some acknowledged that He was the Christ, but the larger portion of those who upon these special occasions

were forced to see that He was the Son of God, refused to receive Him. Their blindness corresponded to their determined resistance of conviction.

When Christ's indwelling glory flashed forth, it was too intense for His pure and perfect humanity entirely to conceal. The scribes and Pharisees did not speak in acknowledgment of Him, but their enmity and hatred were baffled as His majesty shone forth. The truth, obscured as it was by a veil of humiliation, spoke to every heart with unmistakable evidence. This led to the words of Christ, "Ye know who I am." Men and devils were compelled, by the shining forth of His glory, to confess, "Truly, this is the Son of God." Thus God was revealed: thus Christ was glorified.

By raising Christ from the dead, the Father glorified His Son before the Roman guard, before the Satanic host, and before the heavenly universe. A mighty angel, clothed with the panoply of heaven, descended, scattering the darkness from his track, and, breaking the Roman seal, rolled back the stone from the sepulcher as if it had been a pebble, undoing in a moment the work that the enemy had done. The voice of God was heard, calling Christ from His prison-house. The Roman guard saw heavenly angels falling in reverence before Him whom they had crucified, and He proclaimed above the rent sepulcher of Joseph, "I am the resurrection and the life." Can we be surprised that the soldiers fell as dead men to the earth?

Christ's ascension to heaven, amid a cloud of heavenly angels, glorified Him. His concealed glory shone forth with all the brightness that mortal man could endure and live. He came to our world as a man; He ascended to His heavenly home as God. His human life was full of sorrow and grief, because of His cruel rejection by those He came to save; but men were permitted to see Him strengthened, to behold Him ascending in glory and triumph, surrounded by a convoy of angels. The same holy beings that announced His advent to the world were permitted to attend Him at His ascension, and to demand a triumphal entrance for the royal and glorified Being. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," they cry as they near the heavenly portals; "and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The angels at the gates respond in lofty strain, "Who is this King of glory?" And from thousands and ten thousands of voices the answer comes: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Again the

angels at the gates cry, "Who is this King of glory?" and again the response swells triumphantly upward, "The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."

Thus the prayer of Christ was answered. He was glorified with the glory which He had with His Father before the world was. But amid this glory, Christ does not lose sight of His toiling, struggling ones upon earth. He has a request to make of His Father. He waves back the heavenly host until He is in the direct presence of Jehovah, and then He presents His petition in behalf of His chosen ones.

Father," He says, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." And then the Father declares, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." The heavenly host prostrate themselves before Him, and raise their song of triumph and joy. Glory encircles the King of heaven, and was beheld by all the heavenly intelligences. No words can describe the scene which took place as the Son of God was publicly reinstated in the place of honor and glory which He voluntarily left when He became a man.

And today Christ, glorified, and yet our Brother is our Advocate in the courts of heaven. "In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." "We have not an high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." {S.T, May 10th, 1899}

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