

The
TRUE CHURCH
Prepares For Her
FINAL CONFLICT

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Reference Abbreviations

AA — Acts of the Apostles	MH — The Ministry of Healing#
#BC — (Volume) Bible Commentary	MM — Medical Ministry
BE — The Bible Echo	NASB — New American Standard Bible
CD — Counsels on Diet and Food	OHC — Our High Calling
CH — Counsels on Health	PK — Prophets and Kings
COL — Christ's Object Lessons	PP — Patriarchs and Prophets
CT — Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students	RH — Review and Herald
DA — Desire of Ages	SC — Steps to Christ
ED — Education	SD — Sons and Daughters
EW — Early Writings	#SG — (Volume) Spiritual Gifts
GC — Great Controversy	#SM — (Volume) Selected Messages
GCB — General Conference Bulletin	SR — The Story of Redemption
GW — Gospel Workers	ST — The Signs of the Times
HL — Healthful Living	#T — (Volume) Testimonies
HP — Heavenly Places	TM — Testimonies to Ministers
MB — Mount of Blessings	WM — Welfare Ministry
	YI — Youth Instructor

Introduction

Lectures on preparation for the Final Crisis usually focus on the details of the final events. But it is possible to know the final events and not to know how to be ready.

In these lectures we will focus on the *victory* of Christ for us, His wonderful, absolute, *humility* and *selflessness*. We shall study how to receive this victory to its fullest by *prayer-preparation*. Please read carefully. These lectures should be studied in conjunction with the tracts of Series A, especially number 8, *A Presentation of the Gospel and Character of Jesus Christ*.

We anticipate the wonderful and progressive outpouring of God's Spirit as we surrender all to Him in full faith.

1

The Church: The Key to the Meaning and Purpose of History

*T*HE STUDY OF SECULAR HISTORY, as it is done in worldly institutions, gives the student of history no true conception of the meaning or purpose of history. The historians of the world may be able to record and systematize the characters and events that they think are important to the study of history, but they have no understanding of their true interpretation or significance.

The ancient Greeks considered history as a purposeless self-repeating cycle. They considered the existence of man to be an unfathomable mystery. This is the philosophy embraced and expounded by most modern secular historians. They do not know what human existence is about. To them and to most people, history is merely one senseless crisis after another and has no purpose and no intelligent aim. Such a philosophy of history is a philosophy of ignorance, frustration, and despair.

This philosophy has been popularized in modern times by the Frenchman Jean Paul Sartre, who taught that since there is no meaning to existence then the only thing that matters is the present throbbing moment. Out of this

philosophy came the so-called “now generation”, the generation that cannot wait, the generation which wants instant satisfaction of selfish desires.

A generation of college youth steeped in this atheistic philosophy naturally erupted in revolutionary lawlessness and violence, spreading destruction on college campuses and cities worldwide. Almost overnight society exploded in crime, sexual vice, licentious music, and the drug culture. This was the result of the philosophy of ignorance concerning the past and hopelessness concerning the future. Such a hopeless philosophy causes people to say, “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.” 1 Corinthians 15:32.

This *atheistic philosophy* really began in France in the period 1793–1796 and is described in Revelation chapter eleven as, “*the beast from the bottomless pit.*” It is the sixth head of the seven-headed monster of Revelation 12:3, 13:1, and 17:7–10.

This *sixth head of atheistic philosophy* commenced its reign in 1798 and will continue until the beginning of the final crisis when international Sunday laws are enforced. Christ is *now* preparing His church on earth for that final crisis. Satan is *now* preparing his “church” for that final war against the remnant of the body of Christ. Read Revelation 12:17.

The average historian has no clue to the meaning of history because he ignores the only infallible source book, the Bible. For most people, historians included, politics is the center of history for any given period. To most people the stuff of history is the part played by the great empires of the past, including the leading political, military, and financial figures associated with them. But the historians of the world have missed the point altogether. There is only one philosophy of history that makes sense, and that is the Biblical philosophy.

The center of history is not its great empires like Babylon, Greece, Rome, Egypt, or their modern counterparts such as Russia, China, or the U.S.A. To locate the center of history one must bypass all these vast empires and the glittering names associated with them, and find his way to a tiny land called the navel of the earth, the center of the world. And in that tiny land is a tiny hill called Calvary where two thousand years ago a Man named Jesus was lifted up to die. That Man, hanging upon that cross amid the taunts and jeers of the passers by was, is, and shall ever be, the starting point of history and the central personality of history.

“He is before all things.” Colossians 1:17

“All things were made by Him.” John 1:3

“He upholds all things by the word of His power.” Hebrews 1:3

“In Him is the eternal purpose of history. Ephesians 3:11

“From Him emanates the true message of history. 1 John 1:5

“All things in history are working together for His good and the good of His people.” Romans 8:28.

And so it is written:

“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. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:8–10.

“And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church:” Colossians 1:17, 18.

The purpose of history is the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. See Ephesians 3:11.

What is that purpose? The Apostle Paul calls it a mystery which “from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.” See Ephesians 3:9. And in that same verse Paul affirms that one of the aims of the gospel is “to make all men see what is the fellowship of this mystery.”

The manifold wisdom of God is to be revealed *by the church* to all intelligences in the universe. Every event in history transpires to serve that purpose. Nothing, no matter how small, is excluded. The universe, including this planet, was created for the glory of God, that is, to share in and to reflect the infinite love, infinite wisdom, infinite righteousness, and infinite power of God. See Romans 1:19–20.

God did not ordain that sin should occur, but He foreknew its development, and therefore from eternity past He made arrangements to meet the emergency of sin and to prove that love is the eternal and only principle of life whereas selfishness is death.

The human race was created for a very special reason. God purposed in Christ Jesus that through the human race He would clearly reveal the answers to every question raised concerning His Divine Government and

the principles by which that government operates. It is within this context that the following assertions are put forward for careful consideration.

The universe, including this planet, was created to provide a suitable habitation for the human race. The human race was created in the image and likeness of God for one purpose—to provide an eternal companion for the Son. After the fall and promise of redemption through the coming Messiah, the Messianic race was born and nurtured in order to bring in the Messiah. And the Messiah came for one purpose and only one—to give birth to His church, thus to obtain His bride. The church, then, the called-out body of redeemed mankind, turns out to be the central object, the goal, not only of earthly history but of all that God has been doing in all realms, from all eternity.

If this is true, then all history is sacred. There is no such thing as secular history. So history is simply “His story.” The entire universe in its totality is cooperating with God in His purpose to select and train His church as the eternal companion of His Son. And within the context of the absolute freedom of God and the free moral choice of His creatures, the entire universe is ordered for this purpose, for all things belong to the church and are for her benefit. 1 Corinthians 3:21–23. As Lord of history, God is controlling all of its events, not only on earth but in all realms, to serve His purpose of bringing to maturity and eventually to enthronement with His Son, not angels or cherubim or seraphim, but the church, His chosen bride. This was the glorious truth revealed to Paul when he wrote, “*we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, [the church] to them who are the called according to his purpose [the bride]*”. Romans 8:28.

From this it is implicit that infinite love and divine romance are at the heart of the universe and are the key to all existence. From all eternity God purposed that at some time in the future His Son should have an eternal companion, described by John in the Revelation as “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” Revelation 21:9. John further revealed that this eternal companion in God’s eternal purpose is to share the Bridegroom’s throne following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Revelation 3:21. In the whole process of coming to earth in the incarnation, living and dying to give birth to his church, and preparing his church to be his bride and to share his throne, the Lord Jesus Christ is answering every question and solving every problem raised by the satanic rebellion of sin. And thereby such a revelation of God’s love will be given through the church to the universe that the universe will

be rendered “secure” from sin in the eternity to come. Ephesians 5:20–33. Here we see the ultimate purpose, the climatic goal of history!

Romans 8:28 teaches clearly that all that God has been doing from the very beginning was focused upon the church. This and this alone fully unveils the mystery of history and makes it understandable. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13–14, “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and *few* there be that find it.” If God knew from all eternity that the net result of all His creative and redemptive activity on earth would be only this tiny minority, (comparatively speaking) then it may be presumed that this small group was the object of God’s previous enterprises. It is for them that angels render service. Hebrews 1:14. It is for them that the world was formed. For their sake the Adamic race was born. To possess them, God Himself entered the stream of history in the Incarnation. This small group is called the church, the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Matthew 16:18, Revelation 21:9.

Another way of determining the meaning and purpose of history is to look at the end, the final outcome, the net result. Since prophecy is history written in advance, we have history’s final chapter in the book of Revelation. Turning to the closing pages, what emerges as the finished product of the ages? It is one thing and one alone, the eternal companion of the God-Man. The final and ultimate outcome and goal of history, the finished product of all the ages, is the spotless bride of Christ, united with Him in wedded bliss at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, (Revelation 19:6–9) and seated with her heavenly Bridegroom upon His throne. Revelation 3:21, Daniel 7:27. The Son of God entered the stream of human history for this one purpose, to claim His beloved.

The Song of Solomon is the Biblical love story that was written to portray the sweet love between Christ and His beloved church. Thus the church, and only the church, is the key to and explanation of history through Her Lord Jesus Christ. It is not politics but the church that is the key to history. From before the foundation of the world until the dawn of eternal ages, God has been working towards one grand event, one supreme end—the glorious wedding of His Son to His spotless bride, and thereby total victory in the great conflict between light and darkness and the eternal security of the entire universe.

As in the case of Adam, God saw that it was not good for His Son to be alone. From the very beginning it was God's plan and purpose that out of the riven side of His Son should come an eternal companion to sit by His side upon His throne, to share with Him His sovereign power and authority over His eternal kingdom. Read Luke 12:32, Revelation 3:21, Daniel 7:27, John 17:22, and Romans 8:17.

The Father and His Son are now regulating and controlling (within the context of absolute freedom) all things for one purpose—to *prepare and train the church to be the spotless bride of Christ*. Verily, God is the Lord of history!^a

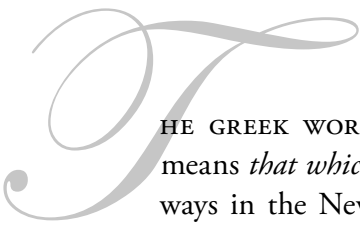
According to Revelation 12:17, it is the remnant of the woman's seed, the final generation of living members of the church through whom and in whom the glorious victory will be completed by Jesus. Through the final generation of living saints will be manifested to the onlooking universe the full and final display of God's love and righteousness. For a comprehensive study of the victory to be won by the final generation of the true church please read and study tract Series A, number 8, *A Presentation of the Gospel and Character of Jesus Christ*.

^a Some passages are derived directly or indirectly from *Destined For The Throne* by Paul Billheimer, used by permission of the publishers: Christian Literature Crusade.



The Church

Definitions and History



THE GREEK WORD FOR ‘CHURCH’ is *Ekklesia* and it literally means *that which is called out*. The word is used in two main ways in the New Testament. Firstly, the scriptures speak of the Church *Universal*, and secondly of the Church *Particular*.

The Universal Church

In Ephesians 1:22–23 we read, “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 fullness of Him that filleth all in all*.” Here we are told that the church is the body of Christ and also that it is “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Scripture gives a full explanation of what it means by these statements. Read carefully the following passages: Colossians 1:18, 24, Ephesians 2 (the entire chapter, but note especially verses 19–22), 1 Peter 2:9–10, 1 Timothy 3:15, Romans 8 (the entire chapter, but note especially verses 9, 14, 16, 17), John 3:3, John 3:5, Hebrews 12:22–23, and Ephesians 3:14–15.

The church on earth is the *called-out body of redeemed mankind*, those who are in Christ, born again of the Holy Spirit; the body of Christ. The church on earth is one with the church in heaven and the unfallen worlds. That is, all the children of God, all who are His whether unfallen or redeemed, compose just one family—God’s family. That family is the Church Universal. The church on earth is *of* the Church Universal. The church on earth is the called-out body of redeemed mankind, and through redeemed mankind God will reveal the fullness of His character and His wisdom to the intelligences in heavenly places.

The Church Particular

The New Testament speaks of particular churches in particular places. For example, Paul wrote a letter to the church of God at Corinth, and he made it clear that the particular church at Corinth was part of the Church Universal. Read 1 Corinthians 1:2. See also Colossians 4:15–16, 1 Corinthians 16:1, and Revelation 1:4.

A particular church was really a particular congregation of the Church Universal which met in a particular place. Such a congregation was not *the* Church Universal, but was *of* the Church Universal.

This whole matter of the church was a simple one in the Apostolic era when the Christian church was in unity. But then there occurred a falling away as was predicted by the Apostle Paul. See 1 Thessalonians 2:1–4.

The church in the Apostolic era, 31 to 100 A.D., is described in Revelation 2:1–7 in the letter to Ephesus. The Christian church suffered severe persecution at the hands of the Romans, yet the church remained united and pure in doctrinal truth and gospel. The period of severest persecution, 100–321 A.D., is described in Revelation 2:8–11 under the name Smyrna.

In 321 A.D. Constantine declared the Roman Empire converted to Christianity, and the church which was kept pure by persecution became corrupted by the influx of pagan doctrines which were gradually intermixed with the Christian doctrines. During that period of darkness, God’s true people realized that the church was rapidly falling away from Christ and His truth. That period of compromise and corruption was from 321 to 538 A.D. and is described in Revelation 2:12–17 in the letter to Pergamos.

By 538 A.D. the “falling away” had reached the level predicted by the Apostle Paul and the man of sin in 2 Thes. 2:3, 4 was revealed. In other

words, the Roman Catholic Papacy was established in Europe as the official and only “Church”. The period of Roman Catholic medieval dominance in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs was the long period from 538 to 1798 A.D. (although by 1750 the Papacy had been considerably undermined by the Protestant Reformation) The period 538 to 1750 is described in Revelation 2:18–29 in the letter to the church in Thyatira. During that period the Popes declared the Roman Church to be the one and only true church, outside of which no one could be saved. The Popes declared that anyone who sought to form any independent group would be guilty of dividing the body of Christ and would be excommunicated. During the Middle Ages, many people realized that the Roman Church was in error both doctrinally and organizationally, but they were afraid to speak out lest they be excommunicated or burned at the stake because that was the fate of millions who dared to stand for truth.

Then came the reformers such as Matthias, Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, and later Luther and Zwingli. These men found from the word of God that the Roman Catholic Church was in fact *not* the church of Jesus Christ at all. Zwingli said, “The Church Universal is diffused over the whole world wherever there is faith in Jesus Christ—in the Indies as well as in Zurich. And as to *particular* churches, we have them at Berne, at Schaffhausen, here also. But the popes, their cardinals, and their councils are neither the Church *Universal* nor the Church *Particular*.”

In Revelation 2:20 Jesus describes the Roman Catholic Church as “*that woman Jezebel*”. Just as Jezebel had married Ahab and led the nation of Israel into idolatry, so too the Roman Church united itself to the political powers of the state and enforced its false doctrines upon Europe and upon wherever in the world it could find a foothold. *Church-State Union* is the fundamental administrative ecclesiastical policy of the Roman Church. Jesus calls it spiritual adultery. Revelation 2:22. On the other hand, *separation* of church and state and the physical *non-interference* by church or state with the religious faith of the individual are the fundamental organizational policies of true Protestantism and are Bible based. Acts 5:17–42, John 16:1–3.

The Protestant Reformation started well, and out of the Roman Church came congregations of people who were seeking for and finding Bible truth. Therefore the Protestant Movement as a whole was the true church in Europe, and the various congregations were churches *particular*

or particular churches of the Church Universal. The Roman Catholic organization was neither the Church Universal nor a church particular. In order to escape Papal and monarchical persecution, many Protestants fled Europe and found new freedom in the New World, especially in the U.S.A., which became a Protestant haven.

The Protestant Reformation had reached high gear under Luther and continued to make progress for about 100 years after Luther. But then there was trouble again. Satan, as usual, in his relentless war against the church of Christ, was busy in his work to deceive and corrupt.

One by one the various Protestant congregations settled down upon a creed of doctrines and the speed of progress in the truth approached zero. By failing to advance in truth they failed to rid themselves of various Roman Catholic errors such as immortality of the creature soul, Sunday sacredness, and false prophetic interpretations. They also failed to make advances in the understanding of the gospel and the issues involved in the great conflict between Christ and Satan. Many protestant groups also fell back into the error of church-state union.

By the years 1755–1780, when the first great signs of Christ's second coming were occurring, the Protestant churches had become spiritually dead. This startling announcement was made by Jesus in His letter to the church in Sardis in Revelation 3:1–5. There were some believers, however, who remained loyal to Christ and His gospel (Revelation 3:4), and these studied the doctrine of the second coming or advent of Christ and this eventually led to the Advent revival.

Even before this there had been the great Methodist revival in England wherein God used Whitefield and the Wesleys to advance and extend the Protestant Reformation. But Methodism also lost its way not long after the death of its pioneers.

The Advent revival gathered progressive momentum in the early 1800's, and although it was a worldwide movement it reached maximum intensity in the U.S.A. in the period 1840–1844. That was a mighty movement indeed. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the central reformatory message was the Second Coming of Christ and the urgent need of preparation to meet Him in peace. As in the previous movements of reform, God used humble, teachable men, and William Miller was His primary messenger. Tens of thousands of members of the various Protestant churches studied earnestly and received the truth with Spirit-filled zeal. They studied

the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and were filled with solemn joy at the prospect of seeing their soon coming Saviour. William Miller rediscovered and re-emphasized the Reformation truths concerning the church and the authority of the Scriptures. The 2300 day-year prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9 was the central prophetic theme. Read Tract Series A, number 6, *The Prophecies of Revelation and God's Last Warning*.

But alas! The popular Protestant church organizations rejected the light. The message preached by Miller and his associates is summarized in Revelation 14:6, 7.

When the Protestant organizations (Sardis) rejected that message, then the message of Revelation 14:8 was proclaimed. Thousands of believers, called Adventists, separated from the fallen churches and came together in the unity of their present truth. They underwent a severe trial of their faith because they had misunderstood the event to occur at the end of the 2300 year prophecy. (See Tract Series A, number 5, *The Heavenly Sanctuary and Victorious Christian Living*, and number 6, *The Prophecies of Revelation and God's Last Warning*.) They thought that Christ would come in October 1844. After that bitter disappointment and terrible trial of their faith, many abandoned the movement, leaving only a handful, who, by careful study, established the truths of the Third Angel's message of Revelation 14:9–12. This revival of the true church is mentioned as the Philadelphian movement in Revelation 3:7–13. Great truths which had been lost to the world for centuries were discovered from the word of God by the great Philadelphian Adventist revival. Truths such as: the true seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible, the true interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, the truth that the human soul is mortal and not immortal, the true doctrines of the Second Coming, the millennium, and the new earth, and, most crucially, the great truths concerning the Heavenly Sanctuary and the closing work of our High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary to give a people perfection of character to endure the "mark of the beast" crisis and to meet Jesus in peace. All of these special truths were rejected and continue to be rejected by the popular mainstream Protestant evangelical "churches". In other words, Sardis remains spiritually dead. Sardis is Babylon.

The word Philadelphian means brotherly love, and such was the experience of believers in the Advent Revival of the period 1840 to 1844. The Divine order of church organization (See Tract Series A, number 7, *The*

Peculiar Sign of God's Peculiar People) characterized the movement. Indeed, there was a revival of true New Testament Christianity.

But again there occurred a falling away. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the Philadelphian Seventh-Day Adventist Movement lost the gospel experience. The human self, with its pride of achievement, replaced the virtues of complete surrender to God and dependence upon Him alone. By the year 1850, the malignant spiritual malady of Laodicean lukewarmness had taken hold of the Advent movement and it became chronic by 1859. The message of Jesus to the Laodiceans is recorded in Revelation 3:14–22. But listen! Revelation 3:10 makes it clear that it is the Philadelphian movement which will successfully endure the final crisis. By comparing Revelation 3:21 with Revelation 3:10 we understand that the last phase of the reformation will produce a revival of the Philadelphian Seventh Day Adventist Movement out of Laodicean Adventism.

At present God's true people, His church on earth, are scattered throughout the various denominations—Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea. Revelation 3 makes it clear that the final revival movement will occur in Laodicea and move forward into fully developed Philadelphia, and according to Revelation 3:20–21, it will be an individual work. That is, Laodicean individuals will take hold of and accept the final revival truths whereas the Laodicean organizational machinery will not.

Although God's true believers are scattered throughout the various denominational organizations, none of these organizations is the true movement of God. As a matter of fact, God's *move* now is to give Laodiceans the victory of Christ so as to enable them to overcome as Christ overcame.

When the Adventist Laodiceans (those who so choose) totally overcome lukewarmness, God will use them to finally call His other people out of the various denominations which constitute Babylon. And this, the very last movement before the close of probation, is described in Revelation 18:1–4. See also John 10:14–16.

Since God's *move* now is to cure Laodiceans of lukewarmness, then it follows inescapably that His *true movement* now is the worldwide revival movement in Laodicean Adventism which is presenting the special Philadelphian truths. These truths, when truly accepted, will produce the final generation of living saints, God's true remnant of Revelation 12:17.

The Philadelphian revival is now going on worldwide. In a few places it is being accommodated within the churches of the Seventh Day Adventist

organization. In most places however, it has been formally forced outside such churches.

The special Philadelphian truths are summarized in such passages as Revelation 12:17, Revelation 14:12, Revelation 18:1–14, and Isaiah 60:1–2. The central truth is the ***testimony of Jesus Christ*** which produces obedience to all of God’s commandments, including the fourth commandment, and therefore guarantees victory over the end-time “mark of the beast” worldwide compulsory Sunday laws which will be enforced by the fallen Protestant evangelical Sunday keeping churches. For a careful study of the Testimony of Jesus, see Tract Series A, number 4, *The Testimony of Jesus*, and number 8, *A Presentation of the Gospel and Character of Jesus Christ*.

The testimony of Jesus Christ is the revelation of the righteous character of God in fallen human nature. Such a revelation in such a nature was given by Christ. Therefore we see that couched in the testimony of Jesus Christ are the three great Philadelphian revival truths:

1. The doctrine of Christ including the truth of the sinful nature of His *human flesh*, and the *sinlessness* of His character.
2. Righteousness by faith—how Christ completely surrendered in full faith to the Holy Spirit who accomplished the will of God in Him for us, thereby destroying the enmity, human selfishness, and establishing Agape Love as the new governing principle in those who are in Him.
3. The crowning of the message of the ***Character of God—The Character of Infinite Love*** which will be fully reproduced in the final generation of living saints who will be fully abiding in Christ. Associated with these grand truths is a flood of advancing light.

Those who have come to accept these truths and are being sanctified through the truth are hoping that Adventist officialdom will fully accept and freely proclaim these wonderful truths and indeed all other wonderful truths. But the past and present signs are not encouraging. In 1888–1895 and then again in 1950 to 1960, the organization rejected the call to experience the message of Righteousness by Faith, and in the 1950’s they altered their position on the human nature of Christ.

Recently the organization published a document on the 27 fundamental beliefs of the S.D.A. Church. Such a publication is beneficial in that it presents, comprehensively, many important Biblical truths. But it has two seriously negative features. First, (even if not intended to) it tends to promote a creed mentality among members who might tend to argue that if a particular doctrine is not in that publication then it is not worthy of their consideration. Secondly, the document does *not* present the clear full truth on the nature of Christ's humanity nor the wonderful victory He won for us in *our* flesh of which *He* partook.

Furthermore, the response to the great light on the Character of God is not clear cut, and ranges from outright rejection in some churches to tolerance or perhaps superficial acceptance in a few churches *with no definite, clearcut statement of acceptance from the organization's officialdom.*

If an organization rejects or refuses to accept truth, it places itself where God cannot use it in the fullest sense to prepare His final generation of living saints. Although God's people are scattered everywhere, He intends to unite them in the truth by the truth, in Christ by the Holy Spirit. *And so in any age the movement which obeys the great principle of 1 John 1:7 is the movement of present truth, (1 Tim. 3:15) the true movement of God.* This is not to say that God cannot or is not using the others, for all things work together for the good of God's cause, but He always has a true movement of present truth (2 Peter 1:12) in every age at any particular time. At this present time His true movement is the Philadelphian Revival in Adventism which will culminate with the full preparation of those who give the final warning and call all the sheep into the final generation fold. John 10:14–16, Revelation 18:1–4, and Revelation 12:17.

The principle of John 10:14–16 is the principle of separation from fallen "churches," and it will reach its grand climax with the call of Revelation 18:1–4 in the near future, at the time of the enforcement of Sunday laws. Jesus Himself was forced to obey that principle of separation from an organization which refused to walk in the light while claiming adamantly to be God's chosen organization.

"The Sanhedrin had rejected Christ's message and was bent upon His death; therefore Jesus departed from Jerusalem, from the priests, the temple, the religious leaders, the people who had been instructed in the law, and turned to another class to proclaim His message, and to gather out those who should carry the gospel to all nations.

“As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ’s withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience.” — DA 232

What about you, friend? Are you in the church of God, the body of Christ? Are you in Christ? And do you intend not only to be in the body of Christ now but to be part of His final movement? The formula for success is clearly spelled out in God’s word. Read and obey John 15:1–14, John 6:37, 1 John 1:5–7 and Revelation 3:14–22.

3

God's Purpose For His Church

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10." — AA 9

"Many and wonderful are the promises recorded in the Scriptures regarding the church." — AA 9

"The church is God's fortress. His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son. From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message

of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people.

“Through centuries of persecution, conflict, and darkness, God has sustained His church. Not one cloud has fallen upon it that He has not prepared for; not one opposing force has risen to counterwork His work, that He has not foreseen. All has taken place as He predicted. He has not left His church forsaken, but has traced in prophetic declarations what would occur, and that which His Spirit inspired the prophets to foretell has been brought about. All His purposes will be fulfilled. His law is linked with His throne, and no power of evil can destroy it. Truth is inspired and guarded by God; and it will triumph over all opposition.

“During ages of spiritual darkness the church of God has been as a city set on a hill. From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts.

“‘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.

“Wonderful is the work which the Lord designs to accomplish through His church, that His name may be glorified.” — AA 11–13

Christ is the Head of the Church. The church is the body of Christ. The work of revealing the fullness of the character of God, which was performed by Christ, will be repeated by His body, the church. Let us now examine more fully the purpose for which Christ came. Remember, that same purpose will be repeated by His church because the purpose of the

Head is the purpose of His church. Now read carefully the following, from *Desire Of Ages*, chapter 1, “God With Us”:

“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.’*

“In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. ‘His strength setteth fast the mountains.’ ‘The sea is His, and He made it.’ Ps. 65:6; 95:5. It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. And upon all things in earth, and air, and sky, He wrote the message of the Father’s love.

“Now sin has marred God’s perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself. No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to

some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live; and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world. The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land, but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud.

“The angels of glory find their joy in giving, — giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know.

“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.

“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.

“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.’ Mal. 4:2.

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of ‘the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.’ Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, ‘that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.

“Lucifer had said, ‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;... I will be like the Most High.’ Isa. 14:13, 14. But Christ, ‘being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.’ Phil. 2:6, 7, R. V., margin.

“This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father’s side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.

“Nearly two thousand years ago, a voice of mysterious import was heard in heaven, from the throne of God, ‘Lo, I come.’ ‘Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me... . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God.’ Heb. 10:5–7. *In these words is announced the fulfillment of the purpose that had*

been hidden from eternal ages. Christ was about to visit our world, and to become incarnate. He says, 'A body hast Thou prepared Me.' Had He appeared with the glory that was His with the Father before the world was, we could not have endured the light of His presence. That we might behold it and not be destroyed, the manifestation of His glory was shrouded. His divinity was veiled with humanity,—the invisible glory in the visible human form.

"This great purpose had been shadowed forth in types and symbols. The burning bush, in which Christ appeared to Moses, revealed God. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was a lowly shrub, that seemingly had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded His glory in a most humble type, that Moses could look upon it and live. So in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, God communicated with Israel, revealing to men His will, and imparting to them His grace. God's glory was subdued, and His majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite men might behold it. So Christ was to come in 'the body of our humiliation' (Phil. 3:21, R. V.), 'in the likeness of men.' In the eyes of the world He possessed no beauty that they should desire Him; yet He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. His glory was veiled, His greatness and majesty were hidden, that He might draw near to sorrowful, tempted men.

"God commanded Moses for Israel, 'Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them' (Ex. 25:8), and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. 'The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.' John 1:14, R. V., margin.

"Since Jesus came to dwell with us, we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs. *Every son and daughter of Adam may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners.* For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, we see 'God with us.'

"Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts. The fall of our first parents, with

all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death. Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself *our* nature, and passed through our *experiences*. 'In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.' Heb. 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was 'in all points tempted like as we are.' Heb. 4:15. He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, 'I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.' Ps. 40:8. As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.

"By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, 'I AM THAT I AM... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.' Ex. 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came 'in the likeness of men,' He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God 'manifest in the flesh.' 1 Tim. 3:16. And to us He says: 'I AM the Good Shepherd.' 'I AM the living Bread.' 'I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.' John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matt. 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. 'God with us' is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.

"In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. 'Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Phil. 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. 'He

was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.' Isa. 53:5.

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'

"By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; *but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen.* In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.' John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.' *God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven.* It is the 'Son of man' who shares the throne of the universe. It is the 'Son of man' whose name shall be called, 'Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Isa. 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,' is not ashamed to call us brethren. Heb. 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.

"Of His people God says, 'They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!' Zech. 9:16, 17. The exaltation of the redeemed will be an eternal testimony to God's mercy. 'In the ages to come,' He will 'show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.' 'To the intent that ... unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known ... the manifold wisdom of God,

according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Eph. 2:7; 3:10, 11, R. V.

"Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union.

"The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, 'and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.' And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,— Immanuel, 'God with us.'" — DA Chapter 1, pp. 19–26

4

The Church: The Legal Basis Of Her Authority

*I*N ORDER TO ENABLE THE Church to overcome Satan, the Second Person of the Godhead entered the stream of human history in the Incarnation. As Man in our sinful fallen flesh, He overcame and vanquished Satan both legally and dynamically. All that Christ did in redemption He did for the benefit of His church. He is “head over all things *to the church.*” Ephesians 1:22. *His victory over Satan is accredited to His church* and to every single member of His church. Moreover, His victory over Satan is to be fully reproduced, dynamically, in His church and in each member of the final generation of living saints—the remnant of the woman’s seed. Although Christ’s triumph over Satan is full and complete, God permits Satan to carry on a “guerilla” warfare against the church, thus giving the church “on-the-job” training in overcoming. It is within the actual experience of this on-going warfare that Christ’s victory is reproduced in the church, His body. We are now on the very verge of the *final* phase of this warfare. Revelation 12:17. And the remnant of the church, the final generation of living saints, must overcome as Christ overcame by receiving from Him His victory as a *full reproduction*

in themselves of the *testimony of Jesus*. Revelation 12:17, Revelation 3:21, Galatians 4:19, 1 Corinthians 15:57, and Revelation 17:14.

The church, now the Body of Christ, is therefore now *militant* and she will become *triumphant* as the Bride of Christ. Since she is to share the throne with her Divine Lover and Lord as joint heir (Romans 8:17, 18), she must be trained, educated, and prepared for her queenly role.

Because the crown is only for the conqueror (Revelation 3:21), the church must learn the art of spiritual warfare, of overcoming evil forces in preparation for her assumption of the throne following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. To enable her to learn the technique of overcoming, God ordained the infinitely wise program of believing prayer. He did not ordain prayer primarily as a way of getting things done. It is His way of giving the church “on-the-job” training in overcoming the forces of evil. This world is the laboratory in which those destined for the throne are learning in actual practice how to overcome Satan and his hierarchy. The prayer closet is the arena which produces the overcomer. Before we actually study the mystery of prayer we need to examine the legal and dynamic basis of the church’s victory.

The good news of the gospel is that Calvary was the triumph of the ages. By His life, death and resurrection, Christ totally and irrevocably defeated and disarmed Satan both *legally* and *dynamically*.

In order to understand what happened at Calvary, one must first comprehend what took place legally in the fall of man in Eden. Man was originally created for authority. He was created and fashioned for domination. When he came forth from the hand of his Maker he was given the rulership of the earth, to reign subject to Christ, that is, as the vicegerent of Christ. In Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8:5–6 we read of the authority and dominion given to Adam. The Second Person of the Godhead was the King and Adam was His vicegerent.

When Adam chose to obey Satan, he became Satan’s slave. Romans 6:16. As a slave of Satan, Adam lost all of his legal rights as the vicegerent of the Son of God. This gave Satan legal authority to rule in Adam’s place, but the Son of God still remained the rightful King of all. Without doubt, Omnipotence had the power to nullify Satan’s conquest of Adam and his heritage, but this would have violated His own moral principles of government. If God had gone over man’s head and had forcibly repossessed the title to the earth from Satan, that would have been without due process

of law. The entire universe is governed by law. Redemption from beginning to end is based upon a system of Divine law. God never uses His power unrighteously. In other words, He uses His power lawfully, for His law is but a transcript of His character. Redemption could not be achieved by force, but by love. Since the absolute law of God was broken, only one equal to God could redeem mankind from the results of transgression.

As a slave of Satan, Adam lost all of his legal rights, not only to his person but also to his domain. This gave Satan legal authority to rule over man and the earth. If Satan's dominion was to be revoked, a way had to be found to redeem fallen man and recover his lost authority without violating universal principles of justice. Since Satan was now the legitimate possessor of Adam and the legal ruler of the earth, God had no moral right, under His code of justice, to arbitrarily annul it. No angel could enter the contest because these legal rights were never his. Thus a member of Adam's race had to be found who could qualify to enter suit in universal court and wrest Adam's lost heritage and dominion from Satan. The government of the earth had been given to man. It was lost by man. It could be legally recovered only by man. But where was the man who could do this? Since Adam was Satan's slave and all his progeny had endorsed Adam's rebellion, they were likewise Satan's slaves. A slave has no legal standing and cannot enter court or lawfully participate in litigation. Thus a member of the human race had to be found upon whom Satan had no claim, one who had *not* endorsed Adam's rebellion, one who could qualify to bring suit to cancel Satan's legal jurisdiction over mankind and the earth.

The Problem Solved: The Incarnation

To the human mind the situation was hopeless, but *God found a way.*

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. 4:4

God solved the problem by the Incarnation. Since Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, the Divine nature was present in Him. Because He was sinless, Satan had no claim upon Him. But because He was “made of woman,” He was an authentic human being and could therefore qualify as a bona-fide member of the human race to enter the legal fight to reclaim Adam's lost estate. If Jesus were not the Son of God by Mary, *by virtue of a supernatural conception*, then He was merely the son of Adam. Since only

God could redeem man, Jesus had to be Divine as well as human—truly the God-man. If He had not lived a sinless life, He would have come under Satan’s control and would have been morally disqualified to enter this legal conflict. *In order to qualify legally, He had to be truly human. In order to qualify morally, He had to be unquestionably Divine.*^a

Moreover, Christ had to redeem mankind from as low a point as that to which sin would have carried human nature. Therefore, He had to take on human nature (flesh and blood) *not* as it was *before* Adam fell, *not* even as it was before the Flood, *but as it was when He came to earth*. Hence Paul tells us in Hebrews 2:14–18,

“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.

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

“Wherefore 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.

“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

Jesus, as a Man, Confronting Satan

Jesus came as an authentic member of the human race. Since He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and virgin born, Satan had no legal claim upon Him. In order to establish a legal basis for authority over Him, it remained for Satan to attempt to induce some moral flaw or imperfection in His character or conduct. There was only one way to do this. Satan must persuade or compel Him to break fellowship or unity with His Father, to pressure Jesus to rebel and act independently. This was Satan’s strategy and master plan. *This was the crux of the struggle between Jesus and the archfiend of darkness.* All the destiny of the world and the human race hung upon the outcome of this struggle. If Satan could by any means at his command prevail upon Jesus to have just one thought out of harmony with His

heavenly Father, he would be victor and would remain the undisputed ruler of the world and the human race. If he could seduce the last Adam as he did the first Adam, his rulership over the world and mankind would be forever secure.

Although Jesus was God, He had to fight this battle and overcome as man. It would have been contrary to universal justice and would have been a hollow victory for the last Adam to employ weapons or uses resources in this conflict which were not available to fallen mankind. Although Jesus had all the resources of Divinity at His command *He engaged Satan in this decisive contest purely as Man in our sinful flesh.* Romans 1:3, 8:3. ^a

The Struggle of the Ages

From Bethlehem to Calvary the conflict raged. In the effort to recover the lost inheritance of the first Adam, the last Adam and the fallen “son of the morning” were locked in mortal combat. For thirty-three years the struggle continued in undiminished fury. The fallen Lucifer, once the Light Bearer, the guardian of the throne of God, the highest of all pre-Adamic created beings, marshaled all of the available resources of the underworld in an effort to break down the allegiance of the God-man to His heavenly Father. One weakness revealed, one thought of rebellion or self-will entertained, and all of Jesus’ efforts to repossess the world and its enslaved race from the usurping god of this world would be lost. That foul fiend, that perverted prince of darkness, did his utmost throughout the Nazareth years, during the temptation in the wilderness, in the opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees to His ministry, in the Garden of Gethsemane, in Pilate’s judgment hall, and finally in the crisis of Calvary, to force a breakdown in Jesus’ allegiance to His Father and a transfer of that allegiance to Satan. ^a

The Wilderness Temptation

In the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus upon the point of *appetite*. He tempted Him to act presumptuously and he offered Him a shortcut to world domination. Jesus overcame by using the word of God in complete surrender to His Father’s will. ^a

“‘And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.’ The words of Mark are still more significant. He says, ‘Immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.

And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts.' 'And in those days He did eat nothing.'

"When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel. But Satan knew that the Saviour had gone into the wilderness, and he thought this the best time to approach Him.

"Mighty issues for the world were at stake in the conflict between the Prince of light and the leader of the kingdom of darkness. After tempting man to sin, Satan claimed the earth as his, and styled himself the prince of this world. Having conformed to his own nature the father and mother of our race, he thought to establish here his empire. He declared that men had chosen him as their sovereign. Through his control of men, he held dominion over the world. Christ had come to disprove Satan's claim. As the Son of man, Christ would stand loyal to God. Thus it would be shown that Satan had not gained complete control of the human race, and that his claim to the world was false. All who desired deliverance from his power would be set free. The dominion that Adam had lost through sin would be recovered.

"Since the announcement to the serpent in Eden, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed' (Gen. 3:15), Satan had known that he did not hold absolute sway over the world. There was seen in men the working of a power that withstood his dominion. With intense interest he watched the sacrifices offered by Adam and his sons. In these ceremonies he discerned a symbol of communion between earth and heaven. He set himself to intercept this communion. He misrepresented God, and misinterpreted the rites that pointed to the Saviour. *Men were led to fear God as one who delighted in their destruction. The sacrifices that should have revealed His love were offered only to appease His wrath.* Satan excited the evil passions of men, in order to fasten his rule upon them. When God's written word was given, Satan studied the prophecies of the Saviour's advent. From generation to generation he worked to blind the people to these prophecies, that they might reject Christ at His coming.

"At the birth of Jesus, Satan knew that One had come with a divine commission to dispute his dominion. He trembled at the angel's

message attesting the authority of the newborn King. Satan well knew the position that Christ had held in heaven as the Beloved of the Father. That the Son of God should come to this earth as a man filled him with amazement and with apprehension. He could not fathom the mystery of this great sacrifice. His selfish soul could not understand such love for the deceived race. The glory and peace of heaven, and the joy of communion with God, were but dimly comprehended by men; but they were well known to Lucifer, the covering cherub. Since he had lost heaven, he was determined to find revenge by causing others to share his fall. This he would do by causing them to undervalue heavenly things, and to set the heart upon things of earth.

“Not without hindrance was the Commander of heaven to win the souls of men to His kingdom. From the time when He was a babe in Bethlehem, He was continually assailed by the evil one. The image of God was manifest in Christ, and in the councils of Satan it was determined that He should be overcome. No human being had come into the world and escaped the power of the deceiver. The forces of the confederacy of evil were set upon His track to engage in warfare against Him, and if possible to prevail over Him.

“At the Saviour’s baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father’s glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam’s sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’ (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity through Christ; now He communicated with humanity in Christ. Satan had hoped that God’s abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored.

“Satan saw that he must either conquer or be conquered. The issues of the conflict involved too much to be entrusted to his confederate angels. He must personally conduct the warfare. All the energies of apostasy were rallied against the Son of God. Christ was made the mark of every weapon of hell.

“Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the

domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated. Never does one leave the ranks of evil for the service of God without encountering the assaults of Satan. The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand. They were urged upon Him in as much greater degree as His character is superior to ours. With the terrible weight of the sins of the world upon Him, Christ withstood the test upon appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon that love of display which leads to presumption. These were the temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcome us.

“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.*

“With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome. ‘And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread’. But He answered and said, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’

“From the time of Adam to that of Christ, self-indulgence had increased the power of the appetites and passions, until they had almost unlimited control. Thus men had become debased and diseased, and of themselves it was impossible for them to overcome. In man’s behalf, Christ conquered by enduring the severest test. For our sake He exercised a self-control stronger than hunger or death. And in this first victory were involved other issues that enter into all our conflicts with the powers of darkness.”
— DA 114–117

“Of all the lessons to be learned from our Lord’s first great temptation none is more important than that bearing upon the control of the appetites and passions. In all ages, temptations appealing to the physical nature have been most effectual in corrupting and degrading mankind. Through intemperance, Satan works to destroy the mental and moral powers that God gave to man as a priceless endowment. Thus it becomes impossible for men to appreciate things of eternal worth. Through sensual indulgence, Satan seeks to blot from the soul every trace of likeness to God.

“The uncontrolled indulgence and consequent disease and degradation that existed at Christ’s first advent will again exist, with intensity of evil, before His second coming. Christ declares that the condition of the world will be as in the days before the Flood, and as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart will be evil continually. Upon the very verge of that fearful time we are now living, and to us should come home the lesson of the Saviour’s fast. Only by the inexpressible anguish which Christ endured can we estimate the evil of unrestrained indulgence. His example declares that our only hope of eternal life is through bringing the appetites and passions into subjection to the will of God.

“In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground which man must travel, our Lord has prepared the way for us to overcome. It is not His will that we should be placed at a disadvantage in the conflict with Satan. He would not have us intimidated and discouraged by the assaults of the serpent. ‘Be of good cheer,’ He says; ‘I have overcome the world.’ John 16:33.

“Let him who is struggling against the power of appetite look to the Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. See Him in His agony upon the cross, as He exclaimed, ‘I thirst.’ He has endured all that it is possible for us to bear. His victory is ours.

“Jesus rested upon the wisdom and strength of His heavenly Father. He declares, ‘The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: ... and I know that I shall not be ashamed ... Behold, the Lord God will help Me.’ Pointing to His own example, He says to us, ‘Who is among you that feareth the Lord, ... that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.’ Isa. 50:7–10.

“‘The prince of this world cometh,’ said Jesus, ‘and hath nothing in Me.’ John 14:30. There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character.

“And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. ‘It is written,’ He said. And unto us are given ‘exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.’ 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God’s word is ours. ‘By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God’ are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours. ‘Thy word,’ says the psalmist, ‘have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.’ ‘By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.’ Ps. 119:11; 17:4.

“Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, —

'He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee:
And in their hands they shall bear Thee up,
Lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'

"Satan now supposes that he has met Jesus on His own ground. The wily foe himself presents words that proceeded from the mouth of God. He still appears as an angel of light, and he makes it evident that he is acquainted with the Scriptures, and understands the import of what is written. As Jesus before used the word of God to sustain His faith, the tempter now uses it to countenance his deception. He claims that he has been only testing the fidelity of Jesus, and he now commends His steadfastness. As the Saviour has manifested trust in God, Satan urges Him to give still another evidence of His faith.

"But again the temptation is prefaced with the insinuation of distrust, 'If Thou be the Son of God.' Christ was tempted to answer the 'if;' but He refrained from the slightest acceptance of the doubt. He would not imperil His life in order to give evidence to Satan.

"The tempter thought to take advantage of Christ's humanity, and urge Him to presumption. But while Satan can solicit, he cannot compel to sin. He said to Jesus, 'Cast Thyself down,' knowing that he could not cast Him down; for God would interpose to deliver Him. Nor could Satan force Jesus to cast Himself down. Unless Christ should consent to temptation, He could not be overcome. Not all the power of earth or hell could force Him in the slightest degree to depart from the will of His Father.

"The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ.

"When Satan quoted the promise, 'He shall give His angels charge over Thee,' he omitted the words, 'to keep Thee in all Thy ways;' that is, in all the ways of God's choosing. Jesus refused to go outside the path of obedience. While manifesting perfect trust in His Father, He would not place Himself, unbidden, in a position that would necessitate the interposition of His Father to save Him from death. He would not force

Providence to come to His rescue, and thus fail of giving man an example of trust and submission.

“Jesus declared to Satan, ‘It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ These words were spoken by Moses to the children of Israel when they thirsted in the desert, and demanded that Moses should give them water, exclaiming, ‘Is the Lord among us, or not?’ Exodus 17:7. God had wrought marvelously for them; yet in trouble they doubted Him, and demanded evidence that He was with them. In their unbelief they sought to put Him to the test. And Satan was urging Christ to do the same thing. God had already testified that Jesus was His Son; and now to ask for proof that He was the Son of God would be putting God’s word to the test,—tempting Him. And the same would be true of asking for that which God had not promised. It would manifest distrust, and be really proving, or tempting, Him. We should not present our petitions to God to *prove* whether He will fulfill His word, but *because* He will fulfill it; not to prove that He loves us, but because He loves us. ‘Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.’ Heb. 11:6.

“But faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan’s counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God’s promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.” —DA 122–126

“Jesus was victor in the second temptation, and now Satan manifests himself in his true character. But he does not appear as a hideous monster, with cloven feet and bat’s wings. He is a mighty angel, though fallen. He avows himself the leader of rebellion and the god of this world.

“Placing Jesus upon a high mountain, Satan caused the kingdoms of the world, in all their glory, to pass in panoramic view before Him. The sunlight lay on templed cities, marble palaces, fertile fields, and fruit-laden vineyards. The traces of evil were hidden. The eyes of Jesus,

so lately greeted by gloom and desolation, now gazed upon a scene of unsurpassed loveliness and prosperity. Then the tempter's voice was heard: 'All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.'

"Christ's mission could be fulfilled only through suffering. Before Him was a life of sorrow, hardship, and conflict, and an ignominious death. He must bear the sins of the whole world. He must endure separation from His Father's love. Now the tempter offered to yield up the power he had usurped. Christ might deliver Himself from the dreadful future by acknowledging the supremacy of Satan. But to do this was to yield the victory in the great controversy. It was in seeking to exalt himself above the Son of God that Satan had sinned in heaven. Should he prevail now, it would be the triumph of rebellion.

"When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. Satan's dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God's, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan's hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.' Dan. 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits.

"When the tempter offered to Christ the kingdom and glory of the world, he was proposing that Christ should yield up the real kingship of the world, and hold dominion subject to Satan. This was the same dominion upon which the hopes of the Jews were set. They desired the kingdom of this world. If Christ had consented to offer them such a kingdom, they would gladly have received Him. But the curse of sin, with all its woe, rested upon it. Christ declared to the tempter, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'

"By the one who had revolted in heaven the kingdoms of this world were offered Christ, to buy His homage to the principles of evil; but He would not be bought; He had come to establish a kingdom of righteousness,

and He would not abandon His purpose. With the same temptation Satan approaches men, and here he has better success than with Christ. To men he offers the kingdom of this world on condition that they will acknowledge his supremacy. He requires that they sacrifice integrity, disregard conscience, indulge selfishness. Christ bids them seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; but Satan walks by their side and says: Whatever may be true in regard to life eternal, in order to make a success in this world you must serve me. I hold your welfare in my hands. I can give you riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness. Harken to my counsel. Do not allow yourselves to be carried away with whimsical notions of honesty or self-sacrifice. I will prepare the way before you. Thus multitudes are deceived. They consent to live for the service of self, and Satan is satisfied. While he allures them with the hope of worldly dominion, he gains dominion over the soul. But he offers that which is not his to bestow, and which is soon to be wrested from him. In return he beguiles them of their title to the inheritance of the sons of God.

“Satan had questioned whether Jesus was the Son of God. In his summary dismissal he had proof that he could not gainsay. Divinity flashed through suffering humanity. Satan had no power to resist the command. Writhing with humiliation and rage, he was forced to withdraw from the presence of the world’s Redeemer. Christ’s victory was as complete as had been the failure of Adam.

“So we may resist temptation, and force Satan to depart from us. Jesus gained the victory through submission and faith in God, and by the apostle He says to us, ‘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.’ James 4:7, 8. We cannot save ourselves from the tempter’s power; he has conquered humanity, and when we try to stand in our own strength, we shall become a prey to his devices; but ‘the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.’ Proverbs 18:10. Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in that mighty name.” — DA 129–131

Gethsemane

The battle which continued through His ministry reached an incredible intensity in the garden. The demonic and satanic pressure upon His spirit was so unutterably devastating that it brought Jesus to the very brink of death. He cried, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death:”

(Matt. 26:38), while from His tortured face the blood drops oozed and spattered onto the ground. The mind staggers and human language bankrupts itself in attempting to describe this scene. As God, He could have called a multitude of angels to His aid, but had He done so He would not have suffered only as a man. ^a

The Substance of the Agony

It was not the prospect of physical suffering which brought the agony in the garden. That was nothing compared to the torture of His spirit. It was the anguish of a pure soul who knew no sin, facing the injustice of being “made sin,” (2 Cor. 5:21) of being so completely identified with sin as not only to forfeit the fellowship of His Father, but to become *the object of the Father’s loathing*. This was no mere legal imputation of sin. *He was made sin. He became the very essence of sin by dying as a sin offering.* He suffered the pollution of sin as if He had actually run the entire gamut of human transgression. He was adjudged guilty of the cumulative sin of mankind and condemned to pay the full price, and completely satisfy the demands of justice against the combined sin of the world.

The temptation of Gethsemane was to refuse to drink the “cup.” The decision He had to make was whether He would retain the fellowship which He had with the Father before the world began or whether He would accept this unjust, yet genuine identification with sin. It was no fictitious temptation. This was what caused His soul to be “exceeding sorrowful, even unto His death.” His unspeakable agony is reflected in the bloody sweat and in His prayer, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; *nevertheless*, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Matt. 26:39. It seems that here the peak of His agony was reached. If ever there was any doubt as to the outcome, it faded after this. “Nevertheless.” Upon that word hung the fate of the entire world. With that decision, the crisis passed. He had accepted the “cup.” ^a

“The humanity of the Son of God trembled in that trying hour. He prayed not now for His disciples that their faith might not fail, but for His own tempted, agonized soul. The awful moment had come—that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Christ might even now refuse to drink the cup apportioned to guilty man. It was not yet too late. He might wipe the bloody sweat from His brow, and leave man to perish in his iniquity. He might say, Let the transgressor receive the penalty of his sin, and I will go

back to My Father. Will the Son of God drink the bitter cup of humiliation and agony? Will the innocent suffer the consequences of the curse of sin, to save the guilty? The words fall tremblingly from the pale lips of Jesus, 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'

"Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: 'If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.'

"Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground from which He had partially risen. Where now were His disciples, to place their hands tenderly beneath the head of their fainting Master, and bathe that brow, marred indeed more than the sons of men? The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.

"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." — DA 690–693

Satan Vanquished by Death

In his effort to compel Jesus to rebel against His heavenly Father and transfer His allegiance to himself, Satan pushed Jesus clear up to death, "even the death of the cross." When at last Jesus bowed His head in mortal agony and died without once failing in His submission to His heavenly Father, Satan was vanquished. Since Satan's great purpose in all that he did

was to produce one small thought of rebellion against the Father, when Jesus died without yielding to that pressure, He conquered, although He died in doing so.^a

“Jesus was taken, faint with weariness and covered with wounds, and scourged in the sight of the multitude. ‘And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium, and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they ... did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshiped Him.’ Occasionally some wicked hand snatched the reed that had been placed in His hand, and struck the crown upon His brow, forcing the thorns into His temples, and sending the blood trickling down His face and beard.

“Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A maddened throng enclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by the unfeeling mob. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed, and the vulgar jest and insulting sneer are passed from lip to lip.

“Satan led the cruel mob in its abuse of the Saviour. It was his purpose to provoke Him to retaliation if possible, or to drive Him to perform a miracle to release Himself, and thus break up the plan of salvation. One stain upon His human life, one failure of His humanity to endure the terrible test, and the Lamb of God would have been an imperfect offering, and the redemption of man a failure. But He who by a command could bring the heavenly host to His aid — He who could have driven that mob in terror from His sight by the flashing forth of His divine majesty — submitted with perfect calmness to the coarsest insult and outrage.

“Christ’s enemies had demanded a miracle as evidence of His divinity. They had evidence far greater than any they had sought. As their cruelty degraded His torturers below humanity into the likeness of Satan, so did His meekness and patience exalt Jesus above humanity, and prove His kinship to God. His abasement was the pledge of His exaltation. The blood drops of agony that from His wounded temples flowed down His face and beard were the pledge of His anointing with ‘the oil of gladness’ (Heb. 1:9.) as our great high priest.

“Satan’s rage was great as he saw that all the abuse inflicted upon the Saviour had not forced the least murmur from His lips. Although He had taken upon Him the nature of man, He was sustained by a godlike fortitude, and departed in no particular from the will of His Father.

“When Pilate gave Jesus up to be scourged and mocked, he thought to excite the pity of the multitude. He hoped they would decide that this was sufficient punishment. Even the malice of the priests, he thought, would now be satisfied. But with keen perception the Jews saw the weakness of thus punishing a man who had been declared innocent. They knew that Pilate was trying to save the life of the prisoner, and they were determined that Jesus should not be released. To please and satisfy us, Pilate has scourged Him, they thought, and if we press the matter to a decided issue, we shall surely gain our end.

“Pilate now sent for Barabbas to be brought into the court. He then presented the two prisoners side by side, and pointing to the Saviour he said in a voice of solemn entreaty, ‘Behold the Man!’ ‘I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.’

“There stood the Son of God, wearing the robe of mockery and the crown of thorns. Stripped to the waist, His back showed the long, cruel stripes, from which the blood flowed freely. His face was stained with blood, and bore the marks of exhaustion and pain; but never had it appeared more beautiful than now. The Saviour’s visage was not marred before His enemies. Every feature expressed gentleness and resignation and the tenderest pity for His cruel foes. In His manner there was no cowardly weakness, but the strength and dignity of long-suffering. In striking contrast was the prisoner at His side. Every line of the countenance of Barabbas proclaimed him the hardened ruffian that he was. The contrast spoke to every beholder. Some of the spectators were weeping. As they looked upon Jesus, their hearts were full of sympathy. Even the priests and rulers were convicted that He was all that He claimed to be.” — DA 734–735

When the results of Calvary are adequately appraised, it appears for what it is, a *triumph of the ages*. When Jesus died without failing in the smallest detail, His death resulted not only in defeating Satan’s purpose to obtain a claim upon Him, it also cancelled all of Satan’s legal claims upon the earth and the whole human race. Under universal jurisprudence, when a man commits murder he becomes subject to the death penalty. A convicted murderer forfeits his own life. He destroys himself. When Satan secured

the death of Jesus, he clearly showed himself a murderer. He who had “the power of death” had slain his millions with impunity since the fall of Adam because he had a legal right to do so. As a slave-owner, Satan had legal title to Adam and all of his offspring. He could do with them what he chose. But he “who had the power of death” and had exercised it on countless millions with full immunity now committed the most colossal blunder of all his diabolical career. In his desperate effort to break Jesus’ oneness with His Father, he slew an innocent Man upon whom he had no legal claim. In so doing he committed murder, and in the court of divine justice, he brought upon himself the sentence of death. This illuminates and authenticates the meaning of Hebrews 2:14,

*“Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, **that through (his own) death he might destroy (render powerless) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.**”*

If this means anything, it means that Satan is now “destroyed,” (not annihilated yet but rendered bankrupt) that all his legal claim upon the earth and man are completely cancelled.^a

Jesus obeyed for us and He died the second death for us. His perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice have satisfied God’s justice for us. The only legal ground we have to stand on is the **righteousness of Christ**. *His* obedience and *His* blood constitute the only basis of our acceptance with God. O praise the Lord that the church has all the legal rights through Jesus her Saviour, Lord, and Head.

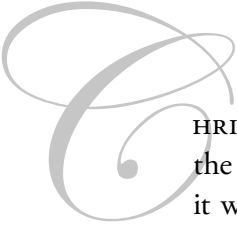
Through Adam’s sin we all had become illegal, unlawful. But in Christ and through Christ we are placed again upon the surest possible legal foundation. **Our title to heaven is based upon, and is found *only* in the righteousness of Christ.**

But he does more than simply to give His church her title to heaven. He also fits her for heaven. This *dynamic* basis of her victory we shall study in the next chapter.

^a Certain passages are derived directly or indirectly from *Destined For The Throne* by Paul Billheimer, used by permission of the publishers: Christian Literature Crusade.

5

Christ's Dynamic Victory For The Church

CHRIST'S VICTORY WAS NOT ONLY legal, it was dynamic. He paid the **full** penalty for *every* sin of *all* mankind. This meant that it was not sufficient for Christ to offer up only His physical life on the cross. The extreme penalty had to be paid. He must “taste death for every man.” Hebrews 2:19. The wages of sin is death, not just the first or physical death, but the second death. Read Romans 6:23, James 1:15, Revelation 20:12–15, Revelation 21:8.

There could be no adequate substitution unless Christ actually paid, once and for all, the eternal consequences of all the sin of the world. That means that He endured *all* that combined humanity could suffer. The Father “delivered Him up” to the eternal consequences of evil for us. Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Throughout His entire life, and more particularly in the final hours leading up to and including Calvary, He carried the awesome and horrible burden of all the sin, guilt, shame, misery and woe of all mankind of all time. He was made to be sin for us. And yet while carrying such a terrible burden of the sin of the entire world, He had, in His person, to condemn

sin in the flesh and live a perfectly sinless life. Satan hurled at Him every weapon of hell. He was tempted in *all* points like as we are because He was made like us in *all* points in His human nature. His flesh was our flesh of which He partook with all the pressure of the liability to sin in that flesh, sinful fallen flesh. Read Romans 1:3, Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:14–18, and Hebrews 4:15.

We cannot fully appreciate what our Saviour endured in order to gain the victory for us. Certain passages of Scripture help us to appreciate a bit more what our Lord had to endure for us. Psalm 22, 69, 88 and Isaiah 53 are some.

But not only did Jesus suffer, the other Persons of the Godhead also underwent incomprehensible pain. It is impossible to imagine what the Father suffered when He had to forsake the Son of His love in order to provide a full atonement for us. It cannot be imagined what it must have cost the Father to unleash the full force of His wrath against the aggregate sin of all mankind upon the innocent person of His beloved Son. From this there was no escape for the Father because He was under the control of Eternal, Infinite Love. The following passages of scripture will help to bring home to our minds something of the great love of God and the infinity of the sacrifice made for us. John 3:16, Romans 8:32, and Isaiah 53:10, 11.

What we have been describing is the light from Calvary which reveals what God's wrath really is. It is the *separation* between Creator and creature, caused by sin. The light from Calvary also reveals that the love of God is infinitely *selfless*. These two important aspects of the light from Calvary will be explained in greater detail in Chapters 6–8.

“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.” — DA 693

“And now the Lord of glory was dying, a ransom for the race. In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. Christ was the prince of sufferers; but His suffering was from a sense

of the malignity of sin, a knowledge that through familiarity with evil, man had become blinded to its enormity. Christ saw how deep is the hold of sin upon the human heart, how few would be willing to break from its power. He knew that without help from God, humanity must perish, and He saw multitudes perishing within reach of abundant help.

“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.” — DA 752–753

“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.” — DA 755

To achieve the victory in the great conflict required the infinitely wise application of *infinite power*, and this is accomplished only by *infinite love*. The Father had to employ all of His love to redeem the lost race. So great was the love which He brought to bear upon the problem that by His life and death, Christ had achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. In Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. God has adopted human nature in the Person of His Son and has carried the same into the highest heaven. O Praise the Lord!

Let us turn our attention now to Christ’s victorious work of condemning sin in the flesh.

The Prophet Isaiah put his finger right on the heart of the basic sin problem in Isaiah 53:6. Thus we understand that selfishness of motive (self-love, self-centeredness, self-seeking, self-exaltation, trusting to one’s self, following one’s own way) is the root-principle of evil. The Scriptures are emphatically clear on this point. Read Romans 15:1–3, Romans 8:5–7, 2 Corinthians 5:15, 2 Timothy 3:2, and John 5:30.

This “mind-that-is-set-on-self”, selfishness, the carnal mind, is *enmity* against God. It is not subject to God’s law, neither indeed can be. See Romans 8:7. When we say that human flesh is sinful we mean that this principle of selfishness and own-way-ness is embedded in our flesh. And for us sinners, this principle of sin in the flesh reigns in the spirit of our minds, thereby making our characters sinful. The good news is that Jesus took on our sinful flesh and never allowed the enmity in the flesh to reign or to even enter His mind, His thinking. **Thus he lived a sinless character in our sinful flesh**, thereby destroying the enmity, that is, rendering it powerless to spoil character. Read Ephesians 3:13–16, Romans 8:1–4, and 2 Corinthians 5:15.

The principle of the cross was the principle of Christ’s life. The principle of the cross is the principle of self-sacrificing love, a love which crucifies selfishness, thereby destroying evil.

When Christ died on the cross, He not only died *for* us, but He put to death our old sinful human nature. *We*, ourselves, died in and with Him. This is the truth which Paul declared in his second letter to the

Corinthian Christians, in 2 Cor. 5:14: “We thus judge, that if one died for all, *then were all dead.*” The same truth is clearly expressed in Romans 6:6, Colossians 3:3, and Galatians 2:20. It is a definite fact that in Christ, sinful human nature has been crucified. When the sinner *believes* this fact and *surrenders* his spirit, mind and will to Jesus Christ, then the death of self becomes living reality in his character experience. Read Romans 6, Colossians 3, and Ephesians 4:22–32.

But that is not all. Not only did we die in Him, but Scripture declares that we are risen with Him and raised with Him to sit in heavenly places. Colossians 3:1, Romans 6:4, 5, 8, Ephesians 1:3.

O what a wonderful triumph we have in Christ.

In Him our selfishness is put to death.

In Him we are resurrected to walk in newness of life:

The Divine way of *love* rather than our own way of *selfishness*

In Him we are raised clear up in Heaven,

Seated with Christ in Heavenly places.

This is the victory we are to claim by faith—by *believing*, and *surrendering all to Christ*. This is the victory that will lift us above sin and enable us to live victorious lives of willing obedience to God’s will.

Selfishness *transgresses* the law of God. Love *fulfills and obeys* the law of God. Romans 8:7, Romans 13:10. We are saved by grace through faith. Salvation is the free gift of God. It is not to be earned by works. But included in the gift package of salvation is the gift of obedience, the *gift* of good works. Ephesians 1:8–10. Therefore, love-motivated obedience to the Ten Commandments, in spirit and letter, is the fruit of faith. The real test of our faith, of our level of surrender, is whether or not we are willing to obey even what appears to us to be trivial or unnecessary.

The fourth commandment concerning the seventh-day Sabbath *seems* to modern man to be trivial. They argue that a day cannot be so important. *But the truth is that it is important because God says so.* Are we willing to surrender our opinion to God in every matter?

It is precisely because God foresaw that man would be prone to exalt his *own* reasoning on the Sabbath day above God’s Word, that He wrote “*Remember, the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.*” Exodus 20:8–11.

God's true church will have experienced His death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heavenly places. This victory will sustain her and make her victorious in her final conflict.

A. T. Jones, the American reformer of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has in his 1895 lectures ably summarized the dynamic victory of Christ for His church in the following words,

"I will say again that the Lord, in order to show mankind what He has prepared for us, what His purpose is concerning each man, has set before us an example, so that everyone in the world can see God's purpose concerning himself and can see it fully worked out. God's purpose concerning us in this world is to keep us from sinning in spite of all the power of sin and Satan. His purpose concerning Himself and us in this world is that God shall be manifested in sinful flesh. That is, in His power He Himself shall be manifested instead of ourselves. It is, therefore, that our wicked self shall be crucified, shall be dead and buried, and that we shall be raised from that deadness in sin and uncircumcision of the flesh to newness of life in Jesus Christ and in God and seated at His right hand, glorified. That is the Lord's purpose concerning you and me. Now let us read it: Romans 8:28:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.'

"How do we know it? He not only says so but He has worked it out before our eyes; He has given a living demonstration of it. So He carries us right through that now. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' What purpose? Why, His eternal purpose concerning all creatures, concerning man with the rest, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. That purpose from eternity is purposed in Jesus Christ, and when we are in Jesus Christ that purpose embraces us. When we yield to Christ, sinking ourselves in Him, we become a part of that eternal purpose, and then just as certainly as God's purpose is to succeed, we shall be all right, for we are a part of His purpose. Then just as certainly as Satan can do nothing against God's purpose, so certainly He can do nothing against us, for we are in that purpose. Just as certainly, then, as all that Satan does, and all that the enemies of God's truth can do, working against God and His divine purpose, and at last all these things against us — so certainly as all this cannot defeat or cripple that eternal purpose, so certainly it cannot

defeat or cripple us, because in Christ we are a fixture in that purpose. O, it is all in Him, and God has created us anew in Him.

“Read on then. God tells us how we know that all things work together for good to those who are called according to God’s purpose. ‘For’ — what does that mean? It means the same here as ‘because’; that is, we know this because God has done something here to demonstrate it so that we can know it. What is this then by which we know it? We know it because ‘whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.’ What is God’s predestination, then? What is the design that He has fixed beforehand, that He has prepared beforehand for every man in the world? For He has foreknown all; He has called all. ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.’ Isa. 45:22.

“What is the destiny that He has prepared beforehand for every one? O, it is that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. Where? While we are in this world, conformed to the image of His Son, as His Son was in this world. But He did not get done with His Son in this world; He took Him from this world. Then as certainly as His eternal purpose carried Christ beyond this world, that predestined purpose is concerning us beyond this world, and carries us beyond this world. And as certainly as His predestined purpose is that we shall be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ in this world, as He was in this world, so certain it is that we shall be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ in that other world, as He is in that other world.

“God’s eternal purpose prepared beforehand for every one of us, for you, for me, is that we shall be like Jesus Christ as He is, *glorified, and at the right hand of God tonight. In Christ He has demonstrated this. In Christ, from birth to the heavenly throne, He has shown that that is His purpose concerning every man. Thus He has demonstrated before the universe that such is His great purpose for human beings.*

“God’s ideal of a man is not as man stands in this world. Take the finest figure of a man who ever stood in this world — the tallest, the most symmetrical, the best educated, the finest in every respect, the fullest, completest man in himself — is that God’s ideal of man? No. you remember that we found back in one of our lessons that God’s ideal of a man is God and the man joined in that new man that is made in Christ Jesus by the destruction of the enmity. That new man that is made of the union of God and man is God’s ideal man.

“But yet take that man as he stands in this world, in the perfect symmetry of human perfection, and unite God with him so that only God is manifested in him, that is not yet God’s full ideal of a man, for the man is still in this world. The ideal of God concerning that man is never met until that man stands at God’s right hand in heaven glorified. O, He has prepared great things for us, and I propose to enjoy them! Yes, sir, I propose to open up and let the wondrous power work and enjoy it as I go.

“Read on therefore. ‘Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.’ O, ‘He is not ashamed to call them brethren.’ ‘He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one.’ ‘Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called [those in whom that call meets its purpose and in whom the call is effective. He calls every soul, that is true on His part, but the call does not meet its purpose; only those who respond and meet the purpose of that call, in whom the call takes hold], them he also justified: and whom he justified [mark, not those who justify themselves, those whom he justified], them he also glorified.’

“Then do you not see that God’s purpose concerning man is not fulfilled until man is glorified? Therefore Jesus came into the world as we do. He took our human nature as we do, by birth. He went through this world in human nature — God dealing with human nature. He went to the cross and died — God dealing with human nature on the cross and in the grave and God raising Him and setting Him at the right hand of God, glorified — that is His eternal purpose. That is God’s eternal predestination. That is the plan He has arranged and fixed for you. Will you let Him carry out the plan? We cannot do it. He must. But He has shown His ability to do it. He has proven that. Nobody can dispute that. He has proven His ability to take us and fulfill His purpose concerning human nature, concerning sinful flesh as it is in this world. And I am glad of it.

“But see here: ‘Whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified,’ — What did He do next? He glorified them. Now a question: those whom He justifies He glorifies; He cannot glorify them until He has justified them. What means, then, this special message of justification that God has been sending these years to the church and to the world? It means that God is preparing to glorify His people. But we are glorified only at the coming of the Lord; therefore, this special message of justification which

God has been sending us is to prepare us for glorification at the coming of the Lord. In this, God is giving to us the strongest sign that it is possible for Him to give, that the next thing is the coming of the Lord.

“He will prepare us. We cannot prepare ourselves. We tried a long while to justify ourselves, to make ourselves just right, and thus get ready for the coming of the Lord. We have tried to do so well that we could approve ourselves and be satisfied and say, ‘Now I can meet the Lord.’ But we never were satisfied. No. It is not done that way. Whom He justified, them He glorified. Now since God justifies, it is His own work, and when He is ready for us to meet the Lord, it will be all right, because it is He Himself who prepares us to meet the Lord. Therefore, we trust in Him, we yield to Him, and take His justification and, depending only on that, we shall be ready to meet the Lord Jesus whenever God chooses to send Him.

“Thus He is preparing now to glorify us. Again I say, It is a fact that we have been content to live too far below the wondrous privileges that God has prepared for us. Let the precious truth raise us to where He wants us.

“No master workman looks at a piece of work He is doing, as it is half finished, and criticizes that and begins to find fault with that. There may be faults about it, but it is not finished yet. And while He works on it to take away all the faults still He looks at it as it is in His finished purpose, in His own original plan, in His own mind.

“It would be an awful thing if the wondrous Master Workman of all were to look at us as we are half finished and say, That is good for nothing. No, He doesn’t do that. He looks at us as we are in His eternal purpose in Christ, and goes on with His wondrous work. You and I may look at it and say, ‘I don’t see how the Lord is ever going to make a Christian out of me and make me fit for heaven or anything else.’ That may be so as we see it. And if He looked at us *as we look at ourselves* and if He were as poor a workman as we, that would be all there could be of it; we could never be of any worth. But He is not such a workman as we and therefore He does not look at us *as we see ourselves*. No. He looks at us as we are in His finished purpose. Although we may appear all rough, marred, and scarred now, as we are here and in ourselves, He sees us as we are *yonder* in Christ.

“He is the Workman. And as we have confidence in Him, we will let Him carry on the work, and as He carries it on, we will look at it as He sees it. Has He not given us an example of His workmanship? God has set before

us in Christ His complete workmanship in sinful flesh. In Christ He has completed it and set it there at His right hand. Now He says to us, 'Look at that. That is what I am able to do with sinful flesh. Now you put your confidence in me and let me work and you watch and see what I am going to do. You trust my workmanship. Let me attend to the work and you trust me, and I will carry on the work.' It is the Lord doing it all. It is not our task at all.

"Now you can go outside of this Tabernacle and look up at that window (referring to the window at the back of the pulpit), and it looks like only a mess of melted glass thrown together, black and unsightly. But come inside and look from within, and you will see it as a beautiful piece of workmanship, and written there in clear texts: 'Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus'; the law of God written out in full and the words, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.'

"Likewise you and I can look at ourselves as we too often do from the outside and all looks awry, dark, and ungainly, and appears as though it were only a tangled mass. God looks at it from the inside, as it is in Jesus. And when we are in Jesus and look through the light that God has given us, when we look from the inside as we are in Jesus Christ we shall also see, written in clear texts by the Spirit of God, 'Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' We shall see the whole law of God written in the heart and shining in the life and the words, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' All this we shall see in the light of God as that light is reflected and shines in Jesus Christ.

"Here is a word of advice:

"'I would that every soul who sees the evidences of the truth' — Do you see them, brethren? Are there not evidences enough here to save us? 'I would that every soul who sees the evidences of the truth would accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.' Do you take Him now as your personal Saviour in the fullness in which He has revealed Himself where He is and ourselves in Him where He is? Do you? Then read this:

"Those who thus accept Christ are looked upon by God not as they are in Adam, but as they are in *Jesus Christ*, as the sons and daughters of God.

“He looks at us as we are in Christ, for in Him He has perfected His plan concerning us. Are you glad of it? Let us take it in, brethren. O! it does my soul good day by day as the Lord opens up these things! It is just as good to me, as I long for it to be to you, so let us receive it in the fullness of that self-abandoned faith that Jesus Christ has brought to us. Let us take it and thank God for it day by day. Let the power of it work in us, raise us from the dead, and set us at God’s right hand in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ, where He sits. Why should we not have a praise meeting for what God has done for us? It is Sabbath. Could we not enjoy it? What do you want to say?” — 1895 GCB Lecture 19 pgs 365–368

(Here followed a praise-meeting, of which a Baptist minister who was present, seeing the large numbers praising God all at once, remarked; “Some might be ready to say that such a number of voices makes confusion. But with all speaking together the praises of the Lord, surely, the Lord and the angels see only perfect harmony, and so do we.”

6

The Testimony Of Jesus: The Full Revelation of the Character of God Through Sinful Flesh— Part 1

The Character Of God — True Knowledge

Jesus said,

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.” John 17:3.

And God said,

“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 loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

According to 1 John chapter 4, the thing to know about God and to experience of God is the fact that *God is love!*

The person who does not know that God is *love* does not know God. The person who knows many things about God, but does not know that God *is* love, really has no significant knowledge about God. The person who knows intellectually that God is love, but who is not experiencing

that love continuously, really is not knowing God in the way that Jesus mentioned in John 17:3. To know that God is love and to have, and keep having, a living experience of being controlled by the indwelling love of God is the true knowledge of God. This knowledge the remnant will have, for, indeed, the Father's name will be written in their foreheads: that is, the character of God, His love, will be fully and irreversibly in control of their whole beings in spirit, soul and body! The remnant will know and understand and experience what the scriptures say about love, for love, the love of God cannot be defined or explained, but Scripture has much to say about its work. 1 Cor. 13.

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 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. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” 1 John 4:7–21.

For some people the statement *God is love* is merely a figure of speech. They fail to grasp the depth of meaning and they fail to see that this

statement is wonderfully mysterious. We are not to reason it out or reason it away, but rather to accept by faith whatever Inspiration tells us about this mysterious fact.

“‘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.

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

“The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love.” — PP 33

“There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. Such religion is worth nothing. When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery.

“Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, ‘What has Christ given for me?’ The Son of God gave all — life and love and suffering — for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him? Every moment of our lives we have been partakers of the blessings of His grace, and for this very reason we cannot fully realize the depths of ignorance and misery from which we have been saved. Can we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and yet be willing to do despite to all His

love and sacrifice? In view of the infinite humiliation of the Lord of glory, shall we murmur because we can enter into life only through conflict and self-abasement?" — SC 44–45

"When, as erring, sinful beings, we come to Christ and become partakers of His pardoning grace, love springs up in the heart. Every burden is light, for the yoke that 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.

"The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. 'We love, because He first loved us.' 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around." — SC 59

"When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie — to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we 'are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2 Corinthians 3:18.

"It was thus that the early disciples gained their likeness to the dear Saviour. When those disciples heard the words of Jesus, they felt their need of Him. They sought, they found, they followed Him. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They were with Him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from His lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to Him, as servants to their master, to learn their duty. Those disciples were men 'subject to like passions as we are.' James 5:17. They had the same battle with sin to fight. They needed the same grace, in order to live a holy life.

“Even John, the beloved disciple, the one who most fully reflected the likeness of the Saviour, did not naturally possess that loveliness of character. He was not only self-assertive and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injuries. But as the character of the Divine One was manifested to him, he saw his own deficiency and was humbled by the knowledge. The strength and patience, the power and tenderness, the majesty and meekness, that he beheld in the daily life of the Son of God, filled his soul with admiration and love. Day by day his heart was drawn out toward Christ, until he lost sight of self in love for his Master. His resentful, ambitious temper was yielded to the molding power of Christ. The regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit renewed his heart. The power of the love of Christ wrought a transformation of character. This is the sure result of union with Jesus. When Christ abides in the heart, the whole nature is transformed. Christ’s Spirit, His love, softens the heart, subdues the soul, and raises the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven.” —SC 72–73

“If the Pharisees would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God’s free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.” —MB 55

“God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith.

“God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. **His very life is the outflow of unselfish love.**” —MB 76–77

When John tells us that God is love, he has told us a profound mystery. **God is love, His nature, His spirit is love.** *Now please notice that when John says that God is love he is not defining God. God, His nature, His spirit is a mystery beyond our definition or explanation, and so is Divine infinite love.* It cannot be defined or explained. So when we say that God is love, we are not defining God, but rather accepting by faith the Scriptural declaration of a fathomless mystery: *God is love!*

Divine infinite love is the very essence, the very nature of God. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. This Divine infinite love is functionally

constituted in the Holy Spirit and is the very nature and essence of the spirit of God.

The main characteristic of love is *unselfishness*. “Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up . . . seeketh not her own.” 1 Cor. 13:4, 5 Divine eternal love, the *very* essence of God’s Spirit is utterly *selfless*. The love which “seeketh not her own” has its source in the heart of God.

“In His life and lessons Christ has given a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering to others. ‘He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ Matthew 5:45. This ideal of ministry the Father committed to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, by His example to teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all.” — AA 359

“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.” — DA 19–20

Whereas the Spirit of God is self-sacrificing love, the spirit of Satan, the carnal mind, is the spirit of selfishness.

“The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. This spirit finds its highest manifestation in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. In our behalf the Father gave His only-begotten Son; and Christ, having given up all that He had, then gave Himself, that man might be saved. The cross of Calvary should appeal to the benevolence of every follower of the Saviour. The principle there illustrated is to give, give. ‘He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.’ 1 John 2:6.

“On the other hand, the spirit of selfishness is the spirit of Satan. The principle illustrated in the lives of worldlings is to get, get. Thus they hope to secure happiness and ease, but the fruit of their sowing is misery and death.” — AA 339

A striking hallmark of self-sacrificing love is harmlessness. Hebrews 7:26, Romans 13:8–10.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Romans 13:10.

Notice carefully that Love does not hurt his neighbour! And who is love’s neighbour? Jesus answers in Matthew 5:43–48:

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, 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 maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

God does not hurt his neighbors. God loves His enemies. Therefore God does not even hurt His enemies! What a revelation of truth from the Scriptures! Compare Romans 13:8–10 and Matthew 5:42–48. And remember, God is absolute. God cannot change. Please read Malachi 3:6, James 1:17, and Hebrews 13:8.

The remnant will fulfill the command of Jesus in Matthew 5:48. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” They will be terribly persecuted because of their stand for Bible truth, the Bible Sabbath and the true gospel of Christ. They will not be allowed to buy or sell. Revelation 13:17. They will be threatened with mass execution. Revelation 13:15. Yet they will not have the slightest desire to retaliate. All traces of aggression, hostility, revenge, strife, and violence will have been cleansed away from their characters. They will love and forgive their enemies even as Christ loved and forgave those cruel tormentors who abused Him mentally and physically, and nailed Him to the cross. The remnant will reflect the **holy, harmless, undefiled** character of Christ. Hebrews 7:26. Self will be so completely and irreversibly crucified that the remnant will have yielded themselves to God for life or death, as should best serve the interests of the cause of Christ whom they love.

The remnant, God's final generation of living saints, will be filled with and fully controlled by the Divine love of God, and since love fulfils the Law, they will keep the commandments of God. Please read Revelation 12:17, John 14:15, Romans 13:8–10, 1 John 5:1–3, and Revelation 14:12.

In His sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5, Jesus highlighted the spirituality of the moral law of God. The Pharisees stuck to the letter of the law, but knew nothing of the spirit of the law. Jesus showed that true obedience is not merely adherence to the letter of the law but to the spirit of the law and the spirit of the law is the Spirit of God which is eternal love. Matthew 5 is an enunciation of the principles of the kingdom of God under the government of Divine love. Please read Matthew 5 carefully and prayerfully and notice verses 17–28 where Jesus emphasizes the unchanging nature of God's moral law, the Ten Commandments.

Selfishness transgresses the law of God. Love fulfils the law of God.

Romans 8:6–7 the carnal mind (= the spirit of selfishness = the spirit of Satan = selfishness of motive) is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be, for to be carnally minded is death.

Selfishness crucifies others while it satisfies self, it does ill to its neighbours and therefore transgresses the law, which is sin (1 John 3:4). "Self" is what a creature is without God, selfishness is the exalting and serving of self in defiance of God. (John 3:6 first part)

Romans 13:10 Love serves others and always seeks their well-being and in so doing it crucifies self, does no ill to its neighbour and thus fulfils the law. Divine love is the gift of God, the gift of the Spirit. (John 3:6 second part)

The cross of Christ explains these facts clearly. See the diagram on the following page:

One Cross — Two Messages

God's Message

*The Goodness of God's
Unconditional Love*

The Spirit of Christ = Spirit
of God = Spirit of Divine
Love, crucifies self in
order to save others.

This is the Way to Eternal Life

1 Corinthians 13 describes
the beautiful features of love.
This Gospel is foolishness to
the worldling, but it is the
demonstration of the very
wisdom of God to those who
are being saved. 1 Cor. 1.

Satan's Message

*The Badness of Selfishness and
its "Throat-Cutting" Methods*

The Spirit of Satan = spirit of
selfishness, crucifies others
including the Son of God in
order to exalt and satisfy self.

This is the Way to Eternal Death

Galatians 5:19–21 describes the
ugly features of selfishness.

God never hurts others to prove His point, for God is love and love does not hurt friend or enemy. 1 John 4:8, Romans 13:10, Matt. 5:43–48. As a matter of fact, God ministers to others and works to save them no matter what the cost is to Himself. These facts the remnant will know both intellectually and spiritually and will fully trust Christ's Divine Love to be their Plan-Maker, Problem-Solver and Burden-Bearer in the final crisis.

This wonderfully good news about God's character (which the remnant will know) is surprising to most people because of what they read in the Old Testament. There they are certain that they see a God who not only hurts but kills His enemies. For this reason most people reject the truth about God's character.

The Apostle James had only the Old Testament as his Bible, and yet he was sure that sin, not God, produced death, and that only good gifts came from God.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 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. Do not err, my beloved brethren. For 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 1:12–17.

James was also quite sure that the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God, therefore God’s wrath is not to be understood in the same way that man’s wrath is understood.

“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.

What most people fail to understand is that ever since Adam’s fall, sin, by virtue of its nature, has transformed the powers of nature on this planet into powers of destruction. Sin produces death (James 1:1) because sin separates the creation from God. Isaiah 59:2. The powers of nature, when separated from God’s perfect control, become powers of destruction. This is clearly portrayed in Revelation 7:1 where the forces of destruction (winds) in this sinful world are pictured as being held in check by the angels of God so as to delay the destructive holocaust, mentioned in Revelation 16, until God’s final generation of saints is sealed.

This perversion of the powers of nature by sin is called the curse, and after Adam’s fall, God announced and predicted the results of sin upon animals, mankind, and all nature. See Genesis 3:14–19.

In other words, the *curse* is the work of *Satan* and *sin*, and when God pronounced the curse He was simply announcing the *results of transgression*. And yet, it was the *judgment of God* for He judged correctly that since Adam had obeyed Satan and voted for Satan’s government, then God could no less than *allow or permit* Satan’s government to take over because *that was man’s choice*. But Satan’s government is a curse, yes! To be more emphatic, it is *The Curse*. For, since only God’s government can maintain order, beauty, perfection, and life, then to ‘hand over’ to Satan’s government is indeed to ‘hand over’ to the curse since Satan’s government is absolutely useless when it comes to sustaining life, order, beauty, happiness or perfection.

We can express the above facts in other words as well. *Sin separates creation from Creator. This separation is the curse.* This curse has results, results of progressive degeneration leading to destruction and death. The separation occurs because God must withdraw from where He is not wanted. He Himself knows when to withdraw and His assessment of the situation is called the *judgment of God*. **Such judgment is always righteous, that is, it is always in harmony with God’s moral law and with the revelation of righteousness given by Jesus Christ. God withdraws only when it is not righteously possible for Him to remain in His role as protector.** The Scriptures make valid the above statements. Let us consider Deuteronomy 28. Verses 1–14 state the blessings of obedience. Verses 15–68 state the curses of disobedience. Read them carefully.

Now turn to Deuteronomy 31:16–18 and learn the *mechanism involved in the curse*. Verse 17 makes it plain.

“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?” Deut. 31:17.

Here the Scriptures make plain that the causative mechanism of the curse is *separation* from God by *sin*. Read also Deuteronomy 32:18–20. Again verse 20 makes clear the mechanism of the destruction. God said “I will *hide* my face from them, and I will see what their end shall be.” Verse 21 onward states the result of “God’s hiding His face from them.” Verse 39 is a very interesting verse indeed, and it is clear from the context that God “wounds” and “kills” by withdrawing, and “heals” and “makes alive” by being present in His role of Sustainer, Protector, and Creator.

Let us now consider the book of Job. Job was a righteous man and had surrendered himself totally to God and His service. So complete was Job’s surrender and trust that God could use Job to prove a point in the great controversy. That point is *that irrespective of the pressure of the circumstances, God’s law can be perfectly kept by fallen man through the redemptive healing of Jesus Christ*. God permitted Satan to afflict Job. In other words, God gave Job up to the curse, and again we see clearly the mechanism.

Read Job 1:6–22 and Job 2:3–10. *When God’s protective hedge was withdrawn, the satanic government struck against Job*. Wonderfully enough,

the nature of sin and the mechanism of destruction are also plainly stated in the Book of Job. Read Job 21:14–17 and Job 22:15–18. Here we understand clearly that sin, when fully formed, *is, in fact, the demand of independence from God. It is asking God to “depart from us.”* Herein lies the exceeding sinfulness of sin, for to ask God to depart from us is in fact asking for destruction since God is the source of life.

Thus we see that it is in the Old Testament itself that the mechanism of destruction is clearly described. *Sin is destructive. It destroys by separating creature from Creator.*

So what does the Bible mean when it speaks about “*God destroying?*” There is an interesting Scriptural comparison in the Old Testament between 1 Chron. 10:13–14 and 1 Sam. 31:3–6 which helps us here!

Now, 1 Chron. 10:13 and 14 tell us that Saul died for his transgression and also for asking counsel of a witch rather than of the Lord, therefore the Lord slew him.

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for as in counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; And inquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.” 1 Chron. 10:13, 14

But 1 Samuel 31, verses 3–6, describe exactly how Saul died. Saul was wounded by the enemy, and preferring not to be killed by the uncircumcised Philistines, he killed himself by falling upon his own sword!

“And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearers, and all his men, that same day together.” 1 Sam. 31:3–6.

So how did God “kill” Saul? He “killed” him by allowing him to reap the consequences of his sin. Saul separated himself from God’s protection and went to war without the defense of God’s grace, therefore there was no

way by which he could survive. Notice that he died by a combination of wounding by the enemy and wounding by himself.

Similarly, the Apostle Paul, in Romans 1, states that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” Romans 1:18. Then in verses 24 and 26, the Apostle explains that this revealing of the wrath of God *against the ungodly* is manifested by *God giving them up*. God executes His wrath by *giving the sinner up* to the consequences of his sin, and the ultimate consequence of sin is death, not just the first death, but the second death. See Romans 6:23, Romans 5:12, Rev.20:11–15, Revelation 21:8, and James 1:15.

This same truth is also found in the Old Testament. In Hosea 11:8, God asked His ancient people a searching question: “How shall I *give thee up*, Ephraim? how shall I *deliver thee*, Israel?”

And please notice that in *giving them up* He would be making them as Admah and Zeboim, cities of the plain which were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 14:2, 3 Gen.19:24, 25. Therefore Hosea 11:8 makes it clear that Sodom and Gomorrah were given up by God to suffer the consequences of sin. When God withdraws His protective hedge of grace, any kind of disaster can occur, including what is called “the falling of the fire of God from heaven.” Read Job 1:8–16. And notice, by comparing Hosea 11:8 with verse 9, that the giving up is the same as the execution of God’s fierce anger of wrath.

According to James 1:20 and Isaiah 55:8, 9, the wrath of God is not the same as the wrath of man. We are all too familiar with man’s wrath and we are thus very liable to think that God’s wrath is similar, but it is not so. In the execution of man’s wrath one man or group of men seek to hurt or kill another man or group of men by the employment of weaponry and force. Therefore man’s wrath transgresses God’s law. Human warfare is the classical example of this mode of operation of man’s wrath.

In direct contrast to human wrath is Divine wrath. When God executes His wrath, He simply allows the sinner to reap what he has sown, to receive the fruits of his choice. Proverbs 11:5, 6; Eccle. 10:8. We sinners should all be permanently dead, but God, in His infinite love through Jesus Christ, holds in check the forces of evil, thus giving us opportunity to live and to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the final judgment men will receive what they have chosen. Those who have chosen Christ will receive eternal

life, those who have rejected Christ will receive the death that they have chosen. Study carefully Proverbs 11:28, Proverbs 8:36, and John 3:36.

The principle of sowing and reaping is clearly set forth by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:7, 8. See also Hosea 10:12–15.

“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 ever lasting.” — Galatians 6:7–8

Please note that “he that soweth to the flesh shall *of the flesh* reap corruption.” The sinner does not reap corruption or destruction from God, but from *sin itself*, as God allows.

Remember that God is the God of freedom. True freedom is not only freedom to choose, but freedom to enjoy, or endure, the results of one’s choice. Cigarette smokers want to be free to choose to smoke, but they do not want lung cancer. Homosexuals want to be free to choose homosexuality, but they do not want AIDS. God wants us to know that freedom carries results and responsibilities, all in a single package. It is because of God’s mercies that we don’t immediately reap the result of our sins. He offers us forgiveness and healing through Jesus Christ, but the day shall come when every man shall reap what he has sown. If we receive Christ and abide in Him unto the end, we shall reap what Christ has sown, eternal life. But if we reject Christ we shall reap what we have sown, the second death. There are no pleasant alternatives. It is a life or death issue. There is no neutral ground. Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me.”

The age long conflict between Christ and Satan is a moral conflict. Satan advocates that creatures can exist very well without God’s government of righteousness. But God tells us the truth. We cannot survive without God’s righteousness, and remember that Christ is the Righteousness of God. God made us all free agents. Free to choose His government or Satan’s government. *The whole idea of freedom of choice would be a farce if God threatens to kill us because we make a particular choice. In fact, God is telling us that His government is the government of life, whereas Satan’s government is the government of death, and, we all have a genuine choice.*

Moving now from all lesser interpretations we behold in Christ the perfect revelation of God’s character.

*“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, **you 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, Shew us the Father?”* John 14:6–9.

“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.” Hebrews 1:1–3.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” Hebrews 13:8.

“For I am Yahweh, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Malachi 3:6.

“It is of Yahweh’s mercies that we are not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22, 23

“The thief cometh not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might, have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” John 10:10, 11

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law; But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:55–57.

“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. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Every good 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 1:13–17.

“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.

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

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us.” Galatians 3:13.

Christ died for us all as our Substitute and Surety.

Christ endured the wrath of God for us. He was punished for our sins. The prophet Isaiah wrote that He was “smitten of God” and “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” Read Isaiah 53. And the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 4:25 that Jesus “was delivered for our offences.”

Please remember Hosea 11:8 where God asked Israel, “How shall I deliver thee?” The word “deliver” in these two texts, Romans 4:25 and Hosea 11:8, means “to give up” or “to give over.” It carries the same meaning as “wrath.” When we look at the description of Christ’s death in Matthew 27:46, we see clearly that God “punished” Christ. He delivered Him up by withdrawing His protective “hedge” and Jesus exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The sins of the world separated our Saviour from the Holy Spirit and caused His death. He died for us. Our sins killed Him. How did the Father smite Jesus? By delivering Him up to the consequences of our sins so that He bore our punishment in order to set us free from the penalty of sin.

We have therefore allowed the Bible itself to interpret what it means when it says that God “smites” or “destroys” or “executes” “His fierce anger.” God “punishes” by allowing the sinner to reap the consequences of sin. God “destroys” by allowing the sinner to be destroyed by the forces of evil. He does this only when the sinner has made up his mind that he does not want God. It is then and only then that God sadly withdraws because He cannot force Himself where He is not wanted.

In Old Testament history, God frequently permitted men or nations to reap the consequences of their sin in a striking manner in order to teach His people that the wages of sin is death. Since Christ has borne the death

penalty for all men, in the New Covenant there have been fewer of those striking cases of the “execution of divine wrath.”

But the day is coming when the rejectors of Christ will be “given up” to reap fully the results of their sin. Revelation Chapter 16 describes the unleashing of the forces of destruction, called the seven last plagues, which will torment and destroy Satan’s last generation of living sinners, that is, those who will receive the mark of the beast. God’s final generation of living saints will be protected from the destructive forces of nature which have been separated from God’s control by man’s sins.

Ultimately, at the end of the 1000 years of Revelation 20, Satan, his evil angels and all the unrepentant sinners of all ages will be destroyed by the final fires of destruction (Revelation 20:7–15), and then indeed it will be clear to all that sin is the destroyer whereas God is the Creator, Saviour, and Restorer through Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit.

Let us summarize the scriptural evidences presented above:

1. Satan and Sin as the Cause of Death.

John 8:44; Hebrews 2:14; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:1, 2, 6, 13; James 1:13–15

2. Death: The Enemy of God.

Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:26; Revelation 21:4

3. Sin Produces Death by Separation from God.

Isaiah 59:2; Jeremiah 17:12, 13, 14; Jer. 17:5–10; Deut. 31:16–18; Deut. 32:15–20

4. God is the Source of Life and never the Source of Death.

John 1:1–10. Note verses 4, 5, 8 and 9. Understand that *light means life*.
John 1:4

Therefore consider the following: James 1:16, 17 and 1 John 1:1–10. Note especially 1 John 1:5, Proverbs 12:28, and 1 Cor. 14:33.

5. Wrath of God means God’s giving up the Sinner to the consequences of His sinful choice.

Romans 1:18, 24, 26, 28. Here Paul explains that God’s wrath is revealed when He “gives up” the sinner, or, according to Isaiah 54:7, 8, when He hides His face from the rejectors of His grace. See also Hosea 4:17; 11:8, 9; 13:9; 14:1; 10:11–15.

6. Mechanism of Protection and Destruction clearly brought out in the Book of Job.

Job 1:8–12, 21, 22; 2:3–7

7. Jesus by His Life and Death clearly demonstrates God's Character.

Isaiah 53:4–10.

Christ was smitten of God, the Lord bruised Him.

Matthew 27:46

God withdrew from Christ. That is the wrath of God. In other words, God delivered Him up.

Romans 4:25

Compare Hosea 11:8, 9.

8. Every Doctrine must be Tested by the Law and the Testimony according to Isaiah 8:20.

The Law = the Ten Commandments.

The Testimony = the Revelation of God given by Christ. Revelation 1:2, 5, Revelation 3:14.

The Law says, “*Thou Shalt Not Kill.*” Exodus 20:13. *The Testimony of Jesus agrees.* Jesus neither hurt nor killed anyone. As a matter of fact, the Scripture describes Him as harmless in Hebrews 7:26 and He Himself announced His character in John 10:10. Note also Hebrews 13:8.

Therefore, according to the **law and the testimony**, (the crucial test) this doctrine is absolute truth.

9. a. God is love. 1 John 4:8; 1 John 4:16

b. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law, Romans 13:10.

c. Therefore God worketh no ill to His neighbour God fulfils His Law.

d. God hurts no one. He gives only good gifts. It is sin that produces hurt and death. James 1:13–20; Matthew 5:43–48

e. God will ultimately ‘destroy’ Satan, all the fallen angels, and unrepentant sinners by giving them up to fully reap the results of sin. When His grace shall be withdrawn, the forces of evil shall collapse explosively to destruction, carrying with them Satan and all his followers. Ezekiel 28:18

This wonderful knowledge of God’s character will be known by the remnant. Moreover, they will fully reflect this character of Divine love to the rest of mankind. The remnant will patiently wait upon God for the fulfillment of His plans, and, because they will know His character and His methods of dealing with sin problem, they will rest their souls completely in His loving care. The Scriptures thus describe them as patient saints. “*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*” Revelation 14:12.

In Paul’s analysis of love in 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle describes the Divine eternal components of divine eternal love:

1 Corinthians 13	
verse 4:	<i>Love</i> suffereth long <i>Patience</i>
	and is kind <i>Kindness</i>
	love envieth not <i>Generosity</i>
	love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up <i>Humility</i>
verse 5:	Doth not behave itself unseemly, <i>Courtesy & Politeness</i>
	Seeketh not her own <i>Selflessness (Unselfishness)</i>
	is not easily provoked <i>Good Tempered</i>
	thinketh no evil <i>Guileness (never assumes that others are bad)</i>
verse 6:	Rejoice not in iniquity but rejoice in the truth <i>Truthfulness</i>
verse 7:	Beareth all things <i>Perseverance</i>
	Believeth all things <i>Faith</i>
	hopeth all things <i>Hope</i>
	<i>endureth all things</i> <i>Endurance</i>
verse 8:	Love never faileth <i>Eternal Perfection</i>

Fifteen characteristics are mentioned: 8 + 7 = 15.

8 = the number of victory

7 = the number of completeness

Love is victoriously complete and completely victorious; all conquering!

All of the above is really a description of the character of God for God is love!

It is not enough to say that God does loving things. God is love! In this text God is not making an accusation against us. He is stating the truth, that we might learn the Source of love. He seeks to bring us to the realization that *He understands us fully*. He knows our past, our upbringing, our education, our failings, and our dreams. *But this knowledge is consistently flavored with His love. He knows nothing about us apart from love!*

God longs to have us understand Him too. But he knows that this can never be until we are fully secure in His knowledge of us.

What a wonderful God is our God! The Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day had no such picture of God. To them God was a powerful tyrant whose favor had to be earned by strict obedience and by killing sacrificial animals. The Pharisees were working their way into the kingdom by striving to obey the Ten Commandments and the other 110 which they invented. Jesus came along and showed them that if a man truly loves he will be spontaneously obeying the Ten Commandments. But in order for a man to love he must receive love as a gift from God because God above is the Source of love. Jesus came to fully reveal the love of God, the character of God. He once told Phillip: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." John 14:9.

Satan tells men that they must first become good before they can come to God. Jesus has told us that we can and must come to God just as we are. Our heavenly Father is longing with infinite love for us to come to Him. He is more eager to save us than we are to be saved. Listen to His words of tender invitation: "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. And remember, God is absolutely trustworthy. "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. There can be no healing apart from Him. When we come to Him, He forgives us, and **so long as we stay with Him**, He will heal our sin-sick characters and reproduce His lovely character in us. He does not reject us. He invites us to come. God hates sin because sin separates us from Him and causes our hurt and death, but God loves the sinner with incomprehensible love. He *would* never think of hurting us because He *could* never think of it (love thinketh no evil). Sometimes He allows us to feel the hurt of sin to bring us to our senses so

that we may seek Him who is the *Lover* of our souls, the *Forgiver* of our sins, the *Healer* of our characters.

We do not have to earn God's favor. He has lavished it upon us through Jesus Christ. He has forgiven us all through Jesus Christ. The only thing left for us to do is to believe this wonderful news, to thankfully receive His forgiveness, and to surrender our lives to Him for His healing grace to make us truly loving with His indwelling love in the Holy Spirit! And when God's love fills us and controls us we will freely obey Him and keep His commandments, for obedience is the fruit of salvation.

“God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. The Divine Nature possesses infinite Wisdom, infinite Knowledge, infinite Righteousness, infinite Power and infinite Love. The hallmark of God is that God *always, without a shadow of turning, uses His power righteously*. Infinite love applies infinite Wisdom, Knowledge and Righteousness to infinite Power. Righteous Power is Power that saves. Unrighteous power is power that kills. God is the Source and Sustainer of all life because He only uses His infinite Power with infinite Righteousness through His infinite Love.

The remnant will know and reflect this wonderful character. They will be willing to die for Christ, while Satan's people will be willing to kill them. This wonderful truth of the harmlessness of Divine Love should enable any last generation person to choose the true Christianity in the final crisis. *Any religion which seeks to hurt or kill those who have a different belief is a false religion. This rule has no exceptions.* Read John 16:1–3 and Matthew 10:16–42. Satan will so deceive the so-called “Christian” world that the Sunday-keeping churches will be sure they are doing God a service when they persecute Sabbath-keepers and ultimately sentence them to death. But Jesus says in John 16:3 that false religion will do such things “because they have not known the Father, nor me.” In contrast, the remnant will know Christ and the Father so well that they are described as “having His Father's name written in their foreheads.” Revelation 14:1. O! Hallelujah!

God's final generation of living saints will overcome “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;” and they will “love not their lives unto death.” Revelation 12:11. Satan usually reserves the death threat as the final weapon in his onslaught upon the Christian. The remnant will be fully delivered from the bondage of fear of death. Christ's victory

over Satan, sin, and the fear of death will be fully reproduced in His final generation. Please study carefully Hebrews 2:14, 15. Fear is an integral part of the bondage of selfishness. The human “ego” naturally seeks to protect self and to strive for recognition and exaltation. The remnant will have been cleansed of every trace of selfishness from their characters. The words of Christ in Matthew 10:39 will be fulfilled in them. “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it.” So the remnant will not be fearful of Satan’s death threat. Their only concern will be whether or not their souls are permanently cleansed of all sin and filled with Divine love. In other words, they will have learned that the only thing one should be afraid of is sin.

Satan, by his lies, has caused people, including Christians, to be afraid of God. Satan would have us believe that there is nothing wrong with sin, but with God. Satan wants us to believe that God is a destroyer. The remnant will be fully delivered from such error, and the truth of 1 John 4:17, 18 will be fully appreciated and experienced by God’s last generation of living saints.

“Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”

“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.”

We love him, because he first loved us.

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

”And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” 1 John 4:17–19.

O! what wonderful truth! There is no fear in love! In fact perfect love, Divine love, God’s Spirit, casteth out fear! And when fear is cast out we are free, absolutely free! Hence the Scriptures emphatically tell us that “where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.” 2 Corinthians 3:17.

Satan wants us to be afraid of God. He wants us to believe that the only thing wrong with sin is that God will kill us for sinning. What a terrible lie! It is sin that hurts and kills us by separating us from God! The basic sin, which causes the separation and leads to further sinning, is self-centeredness, making a god of self instead of acknowledging and

submitting to the one, True, Living God. God knows that apart from Him we have no hope of being righteous or doing good. And so God wants us to know that He loves us no matter how bad we are, and when we believe and accept His love and enter into relationship with Him, He will heal our characters and make us good by His healing love! Some “Christians” have a religious experience consisting of a feeling of oppression. They feel that they must earn God’s favor by (reluctantly) doing this and not doing that, with no sense of freedom of joy whatever. Moreover they are constantly afraid that God will punish them. Such a religious experience is devoid of the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit of the Lord does not work by force.

We must recall that there is more than one kind of force. Far more subtle (and therefore more effective) than physical force is emotional force. And that comes in myriad forms—the threat of withholding love, using past failings to rub the raw nerves of hurting self-worth, and verbal scoldings and harangues, to name just a few.

Our God works not by force but by imparting the principles of truth and illuminating the mind to understand that truth, making it vital to our lives. God doesn’t need to use force to support His truths for they are well able to stand on their own merits.

In human structures, whenever leaders become deficient in truth they must immediately compensate with a display of power. Such leaders either do not have truth behind their schemes or they do not trust the ability of their subjects to grasp what truth they may have.

But God has neither problem. Not only is His government rooted in sensible, coherent truth, He also has great confidence in the capacities of His creatures to perceive that truth! To use force is to deny both these principles.

In an atmosphere of freedom, how quickly our minds respond to grasp the principles of truth on which God builds His gracious government. Are you free in Jesus? Then thank His Spirit for showing you how to be free!

He tells us the truth about our condition. Our separation from Him damages us. God does not punish us by inflicting hurt. We are hurt as a natural consequence of our apartness from the One who is the most loving, caring, truthful, loyal, exciting, innovative, encouraging, et cetera, source of input into our lives. It only makes good sense to agree that He is absolutely correct and to confess our condition. Coming back into right

relationship with Him, (justification) we begin to experience the total healing that God so desires for us.

The remnant will be totally secure in God's Love. They will have no fear of the judgment because they will have fully accepted Christ's revelation of the Father's love and will have been transformed and liberated by that love, thus fulfilling the truth of John 3:14–21. Please carefully study this passage. Note well that a person will not fail the judgment because of sins committed, *but rather because he or she rejects the light of God's forgiving healing love in Jesus Christ*. Perfect love casteth out all fear!

"We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you." — SC 72

The remnant will be true champions of religious liberty. They will preach, with unprecedented power and love the final warning of Revelation 18:1–4, announcing the wonderful news of God's character worldwide. But they will force no one to accept the good news, and they will not force themselves where they are not wanted. They will know that in matters of faith and religion, every human must be left free to make up his or her mind for truth or error without the slightest coercion by church or by government.

The law of God, His Ten Commandments, is the law of love and liberty. James 2:10–12. The first four commandments tell us our duty to God, and, as such, concern the relationship between a person and God. The last six commandments tell us our duty to our fellow men. Since as sinful humans we live in societies, the civil government enforces the *letter* of the law of the last six commandments so as to maintain civil order and so as to protect the fundamental God-given rights of each person. *Never should the government interfere with a man's relationship to God as concerning the "principle" or "letter" of the law of the first four commandments.*

Let us consider a hypothetical example. Suppose the government were to pass a law making it compulsory for every person to be baptized by

immersion at age 21 years. (Now please understand that baptism by immersion is Bible truth and should be experienced by every Christian who intelligently understands and freely chooses the way of salvation.) Suppose then too that the police arrest a 30 year old man who refuses baptism, but who upon threat of punishment complies, and, without the slightest faith in Christ, allows himself to be baptized! *The only obedience acceptable to God* is the willing, loving obedience freely and intelligently rendered to God by a spirit-led and spirit-controlled believer who has chosen to obey by choosing to submit to the Spirit's leading.

Sadly enough, Bible prophecy predicts (See Tract Series A, number 6, *The Prophecies of Revelation and God's Last Warning*) that in the near future the governments of the world, (beginning in the Western "Christian" world) will be persuaded by the "church" to enforce Sunday worship by law. It is then that God's servants (because they love truth and liberty and because they understand God's character) will lovingly announce to the world God's final invitation and merciful warning. The vast majority of earth's inhabitants will reject the truth and join the Sunday-keeping New World Order, seeking thereby to save the world from ruin. God's Sabbath-keeping group will be small indeed, a little remnant, and Satan's wrath will be excited against them. Revelation 12:17. They will be persecuted and ultimately sentenced to death, all because the principles of religious and civil liberty will have been cast aside by a deceived world. This brings us again to John 16, verses 2 and 3. Let us consider the RSV translation:

"The hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me."

Jesus' prediction is puzzling. How can people who don't even know God kill someone on behalf of God? Doesn't religious murder imply a consuming devotion to God? Why, then, does Jesus say that such people don't even know God?

These religious zealots, these self-appointed guardians of public virtue, will never admit to not knowing God. In fact, they probably quote Scripture and invoke God's name as they pull the trigger. They might even thank Him for helping them have such good aim, because the "god"

whom they worship is the kind of god who believes in using force in the name of righteousness.

Such people may kill in the name of God. The problem is that they have the wrong god. They might use the right names when referring to their god, perhaps even calling Him Jesus or Father. But having the right name doesn't make Him the right one. It's His character qualities, His manner of relating to people, His methods of solving the sin problem, that set the true God apart from every counterfeit.

To have a correct understanding of God's true character is vastly more than just theological icing on the cake. Jesus' comments make it clear that to worship an oppressive god is to become such ourselves, for by beholding God, we are changed into His same likeness. If our picture is faulty, the change will also be faulty.

As tragic as it would be that Christians should be put to death for their beliefs, the vastly greater tragedy is that it should be done in the name of God. To see a Christian go to his death-sleep abiding in Jesus brings no satisfaction to Satan. But to see God's reputation blackened in the process brings him a perverse delight, for that is his goal. If there is one thing that is worse than for a person to die, it is for him to die while alienated from God. And nothing could be more alienating than for him to think that God is an oppressive murderer.

Though we will not likely kill in the name of God, may we never in other ways misrepresent Him because we have not known the Father or His Son.

Yes, friend, God's final generation of living saints, the remnant, will indeed have the "Father's name written in their foreheads." Revelation 14:1. They will fully reflect the gracious, harmless, character of God, His Divine Love, His infinite commitment to the absolute freedom of His intelligent creatures. Indeed the earth will be lightened with the glory of God, thus preparing the way for the second coming of our Lord.

—From tract Series A, number 8,
A Presentation of the Gospel and Character of Jesus Christ

7

The Testimony Of Jesus: The Full Revelation of the Character of God Through Sinful Flesh — Part 2

R

REVELATION 12:17 DESCRIBES THE FINAL generation of living saints, the remnant of the woman's seed, as they "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Question: What is the testimony of Jesus Christ?

Answer: It is the witness, the declaration, which Jesus gave concerning the Father. John 1:17, 18; 14:8–11; Revelation 3:14.

Question: And what is the witness, the declaration, the message, the testimony, which Jesus gave concerning His Father?

Answer: 1 John 1:5 gives the answer:

"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.*" Please read carefully 1 John chapter 1. See also 2 Cor. 4:3–6.

Question: And how did Jesus give this wonderful testimony? In what manner, by what method, did He reveal the light of the knowledge of the character of God?

Answer: John 5:30. He did it by seeking *not* his own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him. See also John 6:38, Romans 15:3, John 4:34, 5:19, 14:10, 12:49; Matthew 26:39. It was the method of self-sacrificing surrender to the Father, thus allowing the light of the Father's character to shine through him unimpeded. Please read Tract Series A, number 4, *The Testimony of Jesus*.

Question: And in what kind of human nature (flesh and blood) did Jesus achieve this wonderful victory of total and permanent surrender of himself to the Father so as to perfectly reveal the Father's righteousness?

Answer: In the fallen, sinful, flesh and blood of the children of Abraham. Hebrews 2:14–18, 4:14–16; Romans 1:3, 8:3. Oh yes! He took part of the same flesh and blood as the sinful children whom he came to save. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, but Hallelujah! He lived a *sinless* life in that sinful flesh and therefore won the victory for us so that we, by faith in Him, may be obedient to His law although we too live in sinful flesh. Read Romans 8:1–4 and grasp the wonderful truth of the gospel!

“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.” Romans 8:1–4

Jesus walked after the Spirit and not after the flesh. He therefore did His Father's will and not His own human will. The cross was constantly applied to his own self-will, thus allowing the Father's will to be accomplished in and through Him. The righteousness of the law was therefore fulfilled in Christ because never for a moment did He walk after the flesh, but

rather He walked after the Spirit constantly and continuously. And this victory over the flesh, over self, was won by Him for us, and is given as a free gift to those who willingly accept it and surrender themselves to Him. 2 Cor. 5:14–21; 1 Cor. 15:57.

But let us return to Romans 8:4: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” And consider Romans 13:10: “... love is the fulfilling of the law.”

We conclude therefore that *love fulfills the righteousness of the law in us*. The love of God in the Holy Spirit fills the human spirit of the *surrendered* believer and motivates his soul to obey the law of God. Divine love puts to death human selfishness and fulfills the righteousness of the law of God in the believer’s spirit, and sheds the light out through the believer’s soul. Let us now read John 15:9–14, John 14:15, 1 John 5:1–4, Romans 13:10, and Mark 12:28–30.

In the following verse the lamb is at the center of all focus, “in the midst of the throne” and He is described as having seven horns and seven eyes:

“And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood the Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Revelation 5:6.

In Bible prophecy, a *horn* may represent a kingdom within or arising out of an empire. Daniel 7:7, 19–2. Secondly, a horn may represent the essential characteristics of the particular thing being described. See Revelation 13:11 where the beast with two horns like a lamb is mentioned. The two horns represent the characteristics of civil and religious liberty which characterizes Protestant America.

In Revelation 5:6, the seven horns symbolize the completeness of the perfection of Christ, the Lamb of God. This completeness of character perfection was worked out by the Holy Spirit in the man Christ Jesus. He, being God, could and did receive the fullness of God’s glory through the Spirit, and He, being man, submitted our human nature, of which He partook, to the Holy Spirit. And that wonderful work was accomplished *in Him for us* and therefore *for us in Him*, that is, in us only as we are in Him—only as we surrender ourselves fully to Him, accepting Him as our personal Saviour from sin and as the personal Lord of our lives.

This wonderful achievement of crucifying the human self-will (self-love) and establishing the Divine will (true or agape love) in fallen human nature was *completely* worked out by the Godhead in the man Christ Jesus. In Hebrews chapter 2, the Apostle Paul gives a clear account of these wonderful facts. Please study the chapter carefully and note verse 10 where the Apostle informs us that Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through the sufferings he underwent as a human being.

What sufferings is the Apostle talking about? Now please pay careful attention.

In every situation of life, every trial, every temptation, the human being is faced with a choice. Either he will do his own self-will or surrender self to God and do the Divine-will. The latter involves a cross and is painful, but it is the *only means by which lost humanity can be saved*. Christ achieved the victory for us, and we are given this victory as a free gift when we receive Christ as our personal indwelling Saviour through the Holy Spirit.

*Satan is constantly tempting the believer to have his own way (Isaiah 53:6) and the believer is free to choose either to do his own will or to surrender fully to Christ in **each** situation. This allows Christ's victory over the will of the flesh to be manifested in and through him, thus performing the will of God in the believer's life. **This is victory over sin!***

In every situation in this life the believer has only to know what are God's commands and what are His promises. The believer's duty is to obey God's commands and believe His promises. This is achieved by a relationship of total surrender to Jesus Christ, a relationship which is maintained by prayer and study of God's word. By continuous communion with Jesus, we acknowledge our nothingness and depend totally upon Him to be our righteousness.

Revelation 5:6 summarizes all that has been said so far by the statement "having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Jesus Christ, as the God-man, depended neither upon His own Divinity nor upon His own humanity, but rather He depended completely upon the Holy Spirit which was given to Him without limit. See John 3:26–36, note verses 34, 35. The Spirit of God is **infinite** love. Christ Jesus was motivated not by self-seeking, but by the **infinite** love of God which completely filled Him and controlled His every thought, word, and action.

The entire life of Jesus Christ on earth was one of **complete** and **permanent** surrender to the Father's will through the Holy Spirit. Wherever Jesus went, His attitude, His thinking process, His mind (see Philippians 2) was the same: "Not My will but Thine be done, Oh Father." *It is primarily in this respect that the remnant follow Jesus whithersoever He goeth. They will have reached the point of permanent surrender to the Holy Spirit so that 1 Corinthians 13 and Romans 13:8–14 will be completely fulfilled in their lives. They will keep the commandments of God because they will have the testimony of Jesus.*

When a person understands these principles, there is no more difficulty in knowing what constitutes true Christianity. Jesus Himself is our example, and when we do what He did in terms of Christian practice, and with the same motivation of self-sacrificing love which we receive by being born again of the Spirit, then *following His example constitutes true Christian practice.*

Jesus Our Example:

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, (John 3:34) and therefore the life He lived is the life which a Spirit-filled believer will live. Jesus is unchanging. Hebrews 13:8. Thus we can be sure of what is true Christianity by following the example of the founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is our *example* in surrendering completely to God. John 5:30
John 6:38 Philip.2:1–11.
2. Jesus is our *example* in true Bible Baptism (baptism by immersion)
Matthew 3.
3. Jesus is our *example* in keeping the Ten Commandments. John 15:10
Matt. 5:17–28.
4. Jesus is our *example* in keeping holy the true seventh-day Sabbath
and experiencing true happiness, freedom and sweetness in
Sabbath-keeping. Luke 4:16; Mark 2:27, 28.
5. Jesus is our *example* in adhering fully to the scriptures and rejecting
all unscriptural church traditions and false doctrines. Matt 15:3, 9;
John 4:24; Luke 24:27; 2 Tim. 3:15–17.

6. Jesus is our *example* in teaching and preaching about the end of the world, His second coming, and the bodily resurrection of the dead from their graves. Matt. 24; John 5:24–29.
7. Jesus is our *example* in teaching, preaching and living the truth about God’s character and Christian character perfection. Matt. 5:43–48; Matt 7:7–11; John 14:6–15; 1 John 1:5.
8. Jesus is our *example* in living a life totally governed by and filled with the infinite love of God. In His life on earth He was kind, patient, humble, meek, compassionate, courteous, polite, generous, harmless, honest, true, guileless, happy, and uncompromisingly true to the principles of truth and righteousness found in God’s Word. He was loving, caring, and forgiving towards all. When insulted, persecuted, falsely accused and tortured beyond the limit of human endurance, He maintained a calm, patient, kind, loving and forgiving attitude. He never lost His temper, He never behaved badly, He never retaliated against His enemies, but rather He loved and forgave them and always treated them in the best way possible. He always hated sin but loved the sinner and died to save us sinners— Oh, what love! Oh, what a *Saviour!*

Now please remember that trying to follow the example of Jesus by our own self-effort is *not* Christianity. Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. Christianity is to them a struggle which depends upon their own power.

“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.” — 1 SM 353

“Genuine faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined.

“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience,

but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure.” — 1 SM 363–364

Only the Holy Spirit can reproduce the character of Christ in our souls. The Holy Spirit can do this only as the believer surrenders fully and continuously to Jesus, depending not upon self, but wholly upon the power and righteousness of Christ to keep him from sinning and to empower him to obey by the motivation of Divine Love.

The final generation of living saints, the remnant, will be totally and permanently surrendered to Christ. His character will be fully reproduced in them by the Holy Spirit, thus enabling them to behave like He behaved under the pressure of persecution and torture. They will fully acknowledge that this victory which they possess is the victory of Christ. O, what a wonderful Saviour!

—From tract Series A, number 8,
A Presentation of the Gospel and Character of Jesus Christ

A.T. Jones, the American Reformer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wrote as follows concerning Christ’s victory over hereditary tendencies in our flesh:

The Law Of Heredity

“The Word was made flesh.”

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.” Gal. 4:4

“And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6

“We have seen that in His being made of a woman, Christ reached sin at the very fountain head of its entrance into this world and that He must be made of a woman to do this. Also there was laid upon Him the iniquity, in the actual sins, of us all.

“Thus all the sin of this world, from its origin in the world to the end of it in the world, was laid upon Him—both sin as it is in itself and sin as it is when committed by us; sin in its tendency and sin in the act: sin as it is hereditary in us, uncommitted by us; and sin as it is committed by us.

“Only thus could it be that there should be laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. Only by His subjecting Himself to the law of heredity could He reach sin in full and true measure as sin truly is. Without this there could be

laid upon Him our sins which have been actually committed, with the guilt and condemnation that belong to them. But beyond this there is in each person, in many ways, the liability to sin inherited from generations back which has not yet culminated in the act of sinning but which is ever ready, when occasion offers, to blaze forth in the actual committing of sins. David's great sin is an illustration of this. Ps. 51:5; 2 Sam. 11:2.

"In delivering us from sin, it is not enough that we shall be saved from the sins that we have actually committed; we must be saved from committing other sins. And that this may be so, there must be met and subdued this hereditary liability to sin; we must become possessed of power to keep us from sinning — a power to conquer this liability, this hereditary tendency that is in us to sin.

"All our sins which we have actually committed were laid upon Him, were imputed to Him, so that His righteousness may be laid upon us, may be imputed to us. Also our liability to sin was laid upon Him, in His being made flesh, in His being born of a woman, of the same flesh and blood as we are, so that His righteousness might be actually manifested in us as our daily life.

"Thus He met sin in the flesh which He took and triumphed over it, as it is written: 'God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' And again: 'He is our peace,...having abolished in His flesh the enmity.'

"And thus, just as our sins actually committed were imputed to Him that His righteousness might be imputed to us, so His meeting and conquering in the flesh the liability to sin and in that same flesh manifesting righteousness, enables us in Him, and Him in us, to meet and conquer in the flesh this same liability to sin and to manifest righteousness in the same flesh.

"And thus it is that for the sins which we have actually committed, for the sins that are past, His righteousness is imputed to us, as our sins were imputed to Him. And to keep us from sinning His righteousness is imparted to us in our flesh as our flesh, with its liability to sin, was imparted to Him. Thus He is the complete Saviour. He saves from all the sins that we have actually committed and saves equally from all the sins that we might commit dwelling apart from Him.

"If He took not the same flesh and blood that the children of men have with its liability to sin, then where could there be any philosophy or

reason of any kind whatever in His genealogy as given in the Scriptures? He was descended from David; He was descended from Abraham; He was descended from Adam and, by being made of a woman, He reached even back of Adam to the beginning of sin in the world.

“In that genealogy there are Jehoiakim, who for his wickedness was ‘buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem’ (Jer. 22:19); Manasseh, who caused Judah to do ‘worse than the heathen;’ Ahaz, who ‘made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord;’ Rehoboam, who was born of Solomon after Solomon turned from the Lord; Solomon himself, who was born of David and Bathsheba; there are also Ruth the Moabitess and Rahab; as well as Abraham, Isaac, Jesse, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah: the worst equally with the best. And the evil deeds of even the best are recorded equally with the good. And in this whole genealogy there is hardly one whose life is written upon at all of whom there is not some wrong act recorded.

“Now it was at the end of such a genealogy as that that ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ It was at the end of such a genealogy as that that He was made of a woman.’ It was in such a line of descent as that that God sent ‘His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.’ And such a descent, such a genealogy, meant something to Him, as it does to every other man, under the great law that the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations. It meant everything to Him in the terrible temptations in the wilderness of temptation, as well as all the way through His life in the flesh.

“Thus, both by heredity and by imputation, He was ‘laden with the sins of the world.’ And, thus laden, at this immense disadvantage He passed triumphantly over the ground where at no shadow of any disadvantage whatever, the first pair failed.

“By His death He paid the penalty of all sins actually committed, and thus can justly bestow His righteousness upon all who choose to receive it. And by condemning sin in the flesh, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, He delivers from the power of the law of heredity and so can, in righteousness, impart His divine nature and power to lift above that law, and hold above it, every soul that receives Him.

“And so it is written: ‘When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.’ Gal. 4:4. And ‘God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for [on account of] 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.’ Romans 8:3, 4. And ‘He is our peace,...having abolished in His flesh the enmity,...for to make in Himself of twain [God and man] one new man, so making peace.’ Eph. 2:14, 15.

“Thus, ‘in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.... For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.’

“Whether temptation be from within or from without, He is the perfect shield against it all; and so saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

“God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, Christ taking our nature as our nature is in its sinfulness and degeneracy, and God dwelling constantly with Him and in Him in that nature — in this God has demonstrated to all people forever that there is no soul in this world so laden with sins or so lost that God will not gladly dwell with him and in him to save him from it all and to lead him in the way of the righteousness of God.

“And so certainly is his name Emmanuel, which is, ‘God with us.’”

Alonzo T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, pp. 40–44

8

Christ's Shout Of Victory *"It Is Finished"*

From *Desire of Ages*, Chapter 79, pp. 758–764

"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.

"To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, 'It is finished,' had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory.

"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.

"It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, 'Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and

perfect in beauty.' Ezek. 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father.

"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.

"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.

"Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all.

"When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him. From the time when He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem, the usurper worked to bring about His destruction. In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice. But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from a work He had come on earth to do. From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character.

"All heaven and the unfallen worlds had been witnesses to the controversy. With what intense interest did they follow the closing scenes of the conflict. They beheld the Saviour enter the garden of Gethsemane, His soul bowed

down with the horror of a great darkness. They heard His bitter cry, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' Matt. 26:39. As the Father's presence was withdrawn, they saw Him sorrowful with a bitterness of sorrow exceeding that of the last great struggle with death. The bloody sweat was forced from His pores, and fell in drops upon the ground. Thrice the prayer for deliverance was wrung from His lips. Heaven could no longer endure the sight, and a messenger of comfort was sent to the Son of God.

"Heaven beheld the Victim betrayed into the hands of the murderous mob, and with mockery and violence hurried from one tribunal to another. It heard the sneers of His persecutors because of His lowly birth. It heard the denial with cursing and swearing by one of His best-loved disciples. It saw the frenzied work of Satan, and his power over the hearts of men. Oh, fearful scene! the Saviour seized at midnight in Gethsemane, dragged to and fro from palace to judgment hall, arraigned twice before the priests, twice before the Sanhedrin, twice before Pilate, and once before Herod, mocked, scourged, condemned, and led out to be crucified, bearing the heavy burden of the cross, amid the wailing of the daughters of Jerusalem and the jeering of the rabble.

"Heaven viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross, blood flowing from His wounded temples, and sweat tinged with blood standing upon His brow. From His hands and feet the blood fell, drop by drop, upon the rock drilled for the foot of the cross. The wounds made by the nails gaped as the weight of His body dragged upon His hands. His labored breath grew quick and deep, as His soul panted under the burden of the sins of the world. All heaven was filled with wonder when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of His terrible suffering, — 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' Luke 23:34. Yet there stood men, formed in the image of God, joining to crush out the life of His only-begotten Son. What a sight for the heavenly universe!

"The principalities and powers of darkness were assembled around the cross, casting the hellish shadow of unbelief into the hearts of men. When the Lord created these beings to stand before His throne, they were beautiful and glorious. Their loveliness and holiness were in accordance with their exalted station. They were enriched with the wisdom of God, and girded with the panoply of heaven. They were Jehovah's ministers. But who could recognize in the fallen angels the glorious seraphim that once ministered in the heavenly courts?

"Satanic agencies confederated with evil men in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners, and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with vile and loathsome speeches. He inspired their taunts. But by all this he gained nothing.

"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.

"In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.

“But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God’s glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God’s love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan’s sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God’s love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.

“Through Jesus, God’s mercy was manifested to men; but mercy does not set aside justice. The law reveals the attributes of God’s character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition. God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man’s redemption. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’ 2 Cor. 5:19.

“The law requires righteousness, — a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can ‘be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.’ Romans 3:26.

“God’s love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan’s purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God’s law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God’s plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. ‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ Ps. 85:10.

“By His life and His death, Christ proved that God’s justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan’s charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love.

“Another deception was now to be brought forward. Satan declared that mercy destroyed justice, that the death of Christ abrogated the Father’s law. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or abrogated, then Christ need not have died. But to abrogate the law would be to immortalize transgression, and place the world under Satan’s control. It was because the law was changeless, because man could be saved only through obedience to its precepts, that Jesus was lifted up on the cross. Yet the very means by which Christ established the law Satan represented as destroying it. Here will come the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

“That the law which was spoken by God’s own voice is faulty, that some specification has been set aside, is the claim which Satan now puts forward. It is the last great deception that he will bring upon the world. He needs not to assail the whole law; if he can lead men to disregard one precept, his purpose is gained. For ‘whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.’ James 2:10. By consenting to break one precept, men are brought under Satan’s power. By substituting human law for God’s law, Satan will seek to control the world. This work is foretold in prophecy. Of the great apostate power which is the representative of Satan, it is declared, ‘He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand.’ Dan. 7:25.

“Men will surely set up their laws to counterwork the laws of God. They will seek to compel the consciences of others, and in their zeal to enforce these laws they will oppress their fellow men.

“The warfare against God’s law, which was begun in heaven, will be continued until the end of time. Every man will be tested. Obedience or disobedience is the question to be decided by the whole world. All will be called to choose between the law of God and the laws of men. Here the dividing line will be drawn. There will be but two classes. Every character will be fully developed; and all will show whether they have chosen the side of loyalty or that of rebellion.

“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, (Mal. 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.' Ezek. 28:6–19; Ps. 37:10; Obadiah 16.

"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.' Eph. 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.

"At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.

"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.'"

— DA 758–764

9 *Christ's Gift Of Authority and Victory To His Church*

*F*T MUST BE CLEAR FROM previous chapters that redeemed humanity occupies in Christ a totally unique position in the hierarchy of the universe. This is no attempt to depreciate the rank of angels or to bedim the radiant splendor of their glory. They are indescribably beautiful, unspeakably majestic, unutterably powerful and supernaturally intelligent... Exalted as they are, however, the highest ranking angel hovering over the throne of the Most High is outranked—wonder of wonders—by the most insignificant human being who has been born again, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb!^a

“Man was originally endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed.” — SC 17

The only way in which God could have saved mankind was by the incarnation of the Son of God. And thereby mankind has been elevated

above all other intelligent creatures in the universe, even to the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ! Revelation 3:21.

The Scriptures emphasize this amazing fact in several New Testament passages. In 1 Corinthians 6:17 we read, “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” This union occurs only *in Christ*. It goes beyond a mere formal, functional, or idealistic harmony. It is an organic unity *in Christ*. Christ has in Himself made one new man of God and man! By comparing 1 Corinthians 6:17 with John 3:5, 6, we understand that through the new birth we become *genuine* members of the family of God (Ephesians 3:15); actual generated Sons of God (1 John 3:2); “partakers of the divine nature,” (2 Peter 1:4); a new creation *in Christ* (2 Cor. 5:14–17 —begotten by Him, impregnated with His seed or “sperma” (Greek) of God. 1 John 5:1, 18 and 1 Peter 1:3, 23.)

Hence, the Apostle Paul calls this order of being “the new man,” Ephesians 2:15. the “new humanity.” This is the order of beings which God envisioned when He spoke the worlds into being. From all eternity, God purposed in Christ to have this unique family circle of His very own not only created but also generated by His own life, His own love, in Christ Jesus. “Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be *His very own*, through what Christ would do for us.” Ephesians 1:4, *Living Bible*. Romans 8:28–39 is a description of these mysterious facts.

“For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him... should become like His Son so that His Son would be the First with many brothers.” Romans 8:29, Living Bible.

In other words, Christ is the Prototype after which all other sons are being fashioned. In John 1:12, 13 we learn that the plan of redemption was inaugurated to set up a *unique and original generative method* by which these “many sons” would be born and progressively disciplined by a sanctifying process in order to bring them to glory.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12–13

Here is a distinct reference to two parallel generative methods, one human, the other Divine. And the many sons are to be as utterly like Him as it is possible for the finite to be like the Infinite! Although Christ is the unique

and only begotten eternal Son, yet He does not retain His glory for Himself alone, for He has declared, “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.” John 17:22. In other words, God has exhausted human language to open our eyes to the immensity of His plan for the redeemed. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Cor. 2:9. O Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

But why is it that redeemed humanity, the church, will be so exalted? The answer is found in the cross of Christ. The principle of the cross is the principle of self-sacrificing love, the eternal principle of life and love by which God operates. But before the development of the sin problem this principle of the cross had not been tested in either Creator or creature. For the universe to be ultimately free and, at the same time secure from sin, meant that *the principal on which God’s government is based, the principal of the cross, had to be tested to its utter extremity in Creator and in creature.* In other words, the circuit of beneficence (of which we learned in Chapter 3) must be allowed to be bombarded to the extreme by the forces of selfishness in order to prove and to demonstrate that it works unto life, under all circumstances, for both Creator and creature. Without compulsive force, *love will always win the day by the path of self sacrifice!*

The Second Person of the Godhead had been eternally surrendered to His Father’s love in the Holy Spirit. In the creation of the universe, He was but carrying out the will of His Father’s love. From Philippians 2 we understand that the sin problem demanded that He, “being in the form of God”, should travel the path of surrender even to the point of making “Himself of no reputation”, and take upon Him the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself even farther, even unto the death of the cross. Paul adds,

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:5–11

In other words, self-sacrifice, self denial, humility, the applying of the cross to self is the only path to true exaltation. True exaltation in the government of God is not the exaltation of self, rather, it is the crucifixion, the sacrifice

of self and the exaltation of the principles of Divine love. Satan had sought to find success and advancement by the principle of self exaltation. But Jesus Christ and His church will prove beyond doubt that *true success comes by self sacrifice, by complete surrender to infinite love*. The cross proves that *sacrificing self to serve others is the true pathway of life and success* because ultimately selfishness is self-destructive whereas self-sacrificing love is eternal life. In the end, Satan and all who follow the principle of selfishness will end up dead forever, killed not by God, but by sin, selfishness itself. Those who follow the principle of self-sacrificing love, by the new birth and continuous surrender of self to God, will end up living forever— the inevitable result of love!

Jesus taught the above principle when He was on earth. Read Matthew 23:1–12 and Luke 14:11. See also Proverbs 29:23. The remnant of the woman’s seed, the final generation of the living saints, will, on behalf of the age long church, experience the principle of the cross to the utmost extremity, second only to the severity which Christ endured.

“And thus unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places shall be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:10, 11

Christ won the victory for His church! Hallelujah!

The Church’s Magna Carta

With the preceding facts clearly established, we turn now to Luke 10:19.

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Luke 10:19

Following the return of the seventy, and their jubilant report that even the demons were subject unto them, Jesus replies with a most amazing and startling statement, the significance of which apparently has escaped many believers. He first announced that he had personally witnessed Satan’s expulsion from heaven. It was His word of authority that cast him forth so that Satan as lightning fell from heaven. Luke 10:18. Now He places in their hands that same authority. Now He is saying, “I hand this authority over to you.” Luke 10:19; Hebrews 2:14–15.

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents (evil spirits) and scorpions (demons) and over all the power of the enemy (Satan); and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Luke 10:19

This is the Church’s Magna Carta in her conflict with Satan. Here is a clear *legal* basis for deliverance from Satan’s bondage and oppression, and for offensive action in the conflict with him. *It is clear from this and other passages that God intends the true church, not Satan, to be the controlling factor in human affairs.*^a

Organic Unity

In Ephesians 1:20–22, Paul explains that Christ is the supreme authority in the universe, exalted far above every other name or power or governing authority in creation, and that all things in heaven and on earth have been placed under His feet, that is, under His absolute dominion. Then Paul adds that He is the Head of the church which is His body. Here is not only functional but organic relationship. This is not a mystical, philosophical, symbolic, allegorical or institutional relationship but *organic unity*. To illustrate, the members of a board of directors of a corporation have only a functional relationship to one another. But an arm or hand or foot has an organic relationship to the body because each member draws its life from the life of the body. Just so, the born-again believer has an organic relationship to Christ because his source of life is in Him. The church is not merely an institution ruled over by Christ as President, a kingdom in which He is the supreme authority, but an organism which is in vital connection with Him, having the source of its life in Him. 1 Cor. 12.^a

Organic Unity Prefigured

This organic relationship is foreshadowed, or prefigured, in the creation of a bride for the first Adam. Among all the lower orders of life there was found no fit companion for him. Gen. 2:20. None of them partook of his nature. So Adam was sent into a “deep sleep” and from a wound in his side, a portion of his own body was taken and a helper suitable for him was made. Now there was a being in life who could understand Adam, one who could enter into his plans, ideals, aims, hopes and fears, one who could love as he loved and live as he lived in a manner such as none of the lower orders could. And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” Gen. 2:23. This was *organic* relationship.

In 1 Corinthians 15:44–47, Christ is called the “second man,” the “last Adam.” As the antitype of the first Adam, it was necessary that Christ, the second Man or last Adam, also have a bride. Like the first Adam, He too went into a “deep sleep” of death and resurrection. Out of his wounded side the church, through faith, is born of God as the bride of Christ. In Revelation 21:9 she is called the bride, the Lamb’s wife, and in Ephesians 5, the chapter dealing with both earthly and heavenly nuptials, Paul reveals in verse 30 that as Eve was of Adam so we, the church, are “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” The church is His body now. She will be His bride at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

On the Throne Because of Organic Unity

All of the foregoing clearly supports the organic character of the unity between Christ and His church. If Christ has been exalted as the Supreme Authority in the universe and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, wielding all of the authority of the Godhead both in heaven and on earth, and if the church as His body is organically united with Him as the Head, where does that place the church? Can it be elsewhere except upon the throne with Christ? And this agrees with Paul’s statement of the fact in Ephesians 2:5–6 where he says that after making us alive with Christ, God raised us up together with Him and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In other words, we have already been legally enthroned with Christ because we are organically united with Him and have, therefore, already here and now entered upon our reign with Him. We are co-crucified, co-raised, co-exalted, co-seated with Christ.^a

Practical Effects of Organic Unity

Although to the natural mind this seems utter nonsense, it is nevertheless true. In spite of all her lamentable weaknesses, appalling failures, and indefensible shortcomings, the church is the mightiest force for civilization and enlightened social consciousness in the world today. It was true in the ancient world that as the knowledge of and reverence for God disappeared, moral corruption and crime completely destroyed the social order. “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” Gen. 6:11–13. It

is the same today. The only force in the world that is contesting Satan's total rule in human affairs is the church of the living God. If Satan were unopposed, if he were under no restraint because of the Spirit inspired prayers and holy lives of God's people, "the pillared firmament itself were rottenness and earth's base built on stubble." If there was nothing to hinder him, Satan would make a hell out of this world here and now. The only saving and healing virtue in the howling deserts of human life flows from the cross of Calvary. The only pure unselfishness in the world issues from the fountain filled with blood. If it were not for the totally selfless love displayed on the bloody cross, total selfishness would reign supreme. And total selfishness means total hostility. Total hostility means total anarchy—and that means hell.^a

Civilization a By-Product of the Gospel

All the blessings of peace and tranquility, without which there can be no stable social order and no civilization as we know it, are the result of the gospel. And the true church is the custodian of that gospel. Therefore, the true church is not only the central and fundamental, but also the *vital* institution upon which every other structure—social, political, and governmental—depends. Without the moral and spiritual light shed abroad by the world through the church, there would be no favorable climate for business and commerce or enlightening cultural, educational, and social activities. Without the knowledge of and reverence of God, there can be no orderly and efficient functioning of government. All of the processes of democracy and civilization as we know them require an umbrella of law and order under which to function. This umbrella is maintained and supported effectively only where the gospel has spread its benign and life-giving influence. What we know as Western civilization, providing the highest standard of living, the greatest freedom and personal security, the most domestic peace and tranquility the world has ever known, is definitely a by-product of the Judeo-Christian ethic and the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.^a

The Church Wields the Balance of Power

From the womb of the gospel, then, are born all the principles, standards, and qualities of character which form the foundation of all moral, spiritual, social, and political well-being. The church is the trustee and steward of that gospel. To the extent to which the church has been faithful to that trust,

to that extent she historically has been the saving and preserving influence in human affairs. To the extent that the church has been faithful to her trust, to that extent she has wielded the balance of power in overcoming disintegration and decay in the cosmic order.

Jesus was not speaking in fables and fairy tales when He said to His disciples in Matthew 5:13, 14: “Ye are the salt of the earth;” “Ye are the light of the world.” The world at large is totally blind to this fact but if it were not for the purifying and preserving influence of the church, the fabric of all we call civilization would totally disintegrate, decay, and disappear. At this present throbbing moment, the church, in union with her risen and enthroned Lord, is therefore the fundamental preserving factor in this present world order. *Therefore, by virtue of her organic relationship with Christ, the Supreme Sovereign, she, not Satan, holds the balance of power in human affairs.* It has been truly said that the “... fate of the world is in the hands of nameless saints.” This truth is wonderfully set forth in Psalm 149:5–9:

“Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written. This, honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.”

If it were not for the Church, Satan would already have turned this earth into hell. The fact that it has been preserved from total devastation in spite of him, proves that at least a remnant of the church is effectually functioning and already has entered upon her rulership in union with her Lord. She is even now, by virtue of the scheme of prayer and faith, engaged in “on-the-job” training for her place as co-sovereign with Christ, following Satan’s final destruction.^a

Christ’s Exaltation and the Church’s Enthronement

When Christ took His seat in the heavens, He proved conclusively that Satan’s devastation was complete, that he was utterly undone. Hell was thrown into total bankruptcy. Satan was not only stripped of his legal authority and dominion, but by an infinitely superior force of unselfish love, he was stripped of his weapons also. But this is not all. When Jesus burst forth from that dark prison and “ascended up on high,” all believers

were raised and seated together with Him. “But God... brought us to life with Christ... And in union with Christ Jesus he raised us up and enthroned us with him in the heavenly realms.” Eph. 2:4–6 NEB^a

Identified With Christ in His Death and Resurrection

In the mind of God, every believer shares complete identity with Christ from the cross to the throne. According to the Word, we are crucified with Him, buried with Him, raised with Him, exalted with Him, and enthroned with Him. Romans 6 and Eph. 2. How is this understandable? Consider the following:

The total cumulative sin of the world could not be laid upon Him independent of the sinner himself. There is no such thing as abstract sin, sin apart from the sinner. Not only was the sinner’s sin laid upon Him, but the person of the sinner as well. Therefore, when He went to the cross He carried the entire human race with Him. “We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead.” 2 Cor. 5:14. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” Gal. 2:20 *NASV*. “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him” 2 Tim. 2:11. All mankind was legally identified with Him in death, *but only those who believe are identified with Him in His resurrection and exaltation.*

Identified With Christ in His Exaltation and Enthronement

We are not surprised that *He* is exalted and enthroned in the heavens. What is difficult for us to comprehend is that *we* have been exalted with Him. Yet if “he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit,” (1 Cor. 6:17) it cannot be otherwise. We are not surprised that “all things have been put under *his* feet.” What we have failed to comprehend is that as part of Him, His body, all things are also legally beneath *our* feet. What we do not realize is that He is “the head over all things to the church.” Eph.1:22. This means that His headship over all things is assumed and held for the benefit of the church and is directed toward His purpose for her. *We have underestimated the supreme importance of the church in God’s economy.* She is the center and motive of all His activity from all eternity. He does nothing solely for His own sake. She is included as a full partner in all His plans. The church is His Body, the fullness of Him that fills all things everywhere. *He is not full or complete without His church which is His body.* This is true only because of God’s voluntary self-limitation. In the absolute, God is wholly self-sufficient. He needs nothing and can be served by no one. Yet He has

chosen voluntarily to limit Himself in order that the church may become His judicial equal. It is true that the Body cannot function without the Head. It is just as true that the Head, by His own choice, cannot function without the Body. Both are equally important to the accomplishment of His plan.^a

Identified With Christ in His Conquest of Satan

The same truth is taught in the figure of the vine and the branches. While it is true that “the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine,” (John 15:4) it is also true that the vine does not bear fruit without the branches on which the fruit appears. These are illustrations of God’s voluntary limiting of Himself so that He not only needs the church, but, due to the nature of the Divine economy, He cannot accomplish His chosen goal without her. Because of God’s free self-limitation, the Body is equally important as the Head for functioning, just as the branch is equally important as the vine for fruit bearing. *His voluntary self-limitation is for the purpose of making room for the members of His “Bridehood” to realize their full potential as generic sons of God.* His goal in His self-limitation is to inaugurate a process by which the members of the “Bridehood”, as judicial equals, may eternally approximate the character of the Son, thus implementing His plan to “bring many sons to glory,” to their highest potential as blood-brothers of the Eternal Son.

He has taken us into His family as “His very own,” that is, as generated members of His household, as distinguished from other orders of beings who are only created, not generated. *Through the new birth we are the “next of kin.”* We are organically a part of Christ. As a part of Him, when He conquered the forces of darkness and left them disarmed and paralyzed before He arose from the dead, we who believe were participants in that victory. When He snatched the keys of death and hell from Satan and burst forth from the tomb, we were sharers in that triumph. When He ascended up on high and took His seat in the heavens, we were exalted with Him. Because Satan and all the host of hell are beneath His feet, they are likewise beneath ours. *When He defeated Satan it was our victory. He did not conquer Satan for Himself. The entire substitutionary work of Christ was for His Bride-elect, the church.* He became our flesh and blood so that He could enter the conflict and overcome Satan for her benefit, not for His. *Therefore, we are Satan’s masters. He can lord it over us no more.* His

dominion over us ended at Calvary. Instead of his having power over us, we have been given authority over him. This is the meaning of our enthronement with Christ.^a

Satanic Guerrilla Warfare

One of our great difficulties, after we know who we are, is that under satanic pressure we soon forget. For although Satan knows what Christ did to him at Calvary and through the Resurrection, and realizes that as a part of Christ the believer is his master, he still carries on a guerrilla warfare against the church through the use of subterfuge, deception, and bluff. While guerrilla warfare is illegal, it is still warfare and must be faced and overcome. God could put Satan completely away, but He has chosen to use him to give the church “on-the-job” training in overcoming. Otherwise, there would be no more warfare of any kind. We are in apprenticeship for our place with Christ on the throne following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The crown belongs to the conqueror—and without an adversary there could be no practice in overcoming. Thus, when God permits Satan to throw his black mantle over our spirits, we are in danger of forgetting who we are. We are like the man James tells us about, who looks at his face in a mirror, and looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. James 1:23–24. Because we forget so easily that we have passed from Satan’s authority, we allow him to threaten and oppress us. We forget that we are actually a part of Christ and that Satan is subject to us. We unconsciously lapse into our old life of fear and defeat, seeing ourselves as we were and not as we are. We must constantly remind ourselves and affirm that we are in Christ—and because Satan cannot touch Christ, he cannot touch us. “No one who has become a part of God’s family makes a practice of sinning, for Christ, God’s Son, holds him securely, and the devil cannot get his hands on him.” 1 John 5:18 *LB*. Satan wants the believer to forget that he is risen and exalted with Christ, that he is now, in his real person (that is, his spirit), united with Christ on the throne with all enemies under his feet. If he is held in bondage to demons of fear, sickness, disease, or limitation of any kind, it is only by ignorance of what Christ has done for him, or by forgetting who he is.^a

Affirmation of Identity

We need constantly to remind ourselves of our identity by affirming: Because I am a part of Christ, “accepted in the Beloved,” I hold the same

place in the Father's bosom as He does. Because I am a part of Christ, the Father loves me as much as He loves Christ. John 17:23, 26. Because I am a part of Christ, I have His wisdom because He is made wisdom to me. 1 Cor. 1:30. Likewise, I have His righteousness. My righteousness is as good as His in the eyes of the Father because it is His righteousness. Because I am organically a part of Him, because Head and Body are one unit, *all that Christ is and has is accredited to me.*"

It is the Father's purpose to make all of the sons as nearly equal with the Son as it is possible for the finite to be like the Infinite. This equality is to be first in character and then in privilege and power. It is to be not only legal and theoretical, but in essential reality. "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." And so we should not be like fearful, cringing slaves, but we should behave like God's very own children. "Since we are his children, we will share his treasures—for all God gives to his Son Jesus is now ours too. But if we are to share His glory, we must also share his suffering." Romans 8:14, 17 *LB*^a

The Unlimited Potential of the Church

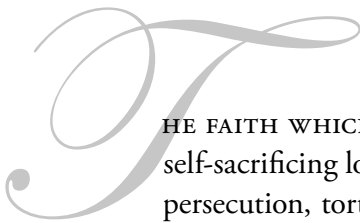
All of this is assurance that it is God's intention that the Church Militant should walk in the same life, power, and divine liberty as Jesus walked. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." This "even so" suggests that we are sent under the same circumstances, with the same authority, and with the same resources as the Father sent the Son. *God does not set any arbitrary limits to the church's use of divine resources.* He has made available all that He is to a believing Church. "Of his fulness have all we received" John 1:16. "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. 3:19. All limitation is on the part of the believer. One saint realized the full potential of walking with God, clear up to translation. What one man did by faith, it is conceivable that others may do. God has given us the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but He does not compel us to use them. He waits. The rest is up to us, His church. In His triumph over Satan, He has given us the needed weapons. How well we use them is our responsibility and may well determine our rank in the Bridehood.^a

^a Certain passages in this chapter are derived directly or indirectly from *Destined For The Throne* by Paul Billheimer, used by permission of the publishers: Christian Literature Crusade.

10

“Gold Tried With Fire”

PART I



THE FAITH WHICH REMAINS SURRENDERED to the principle of self-sacrificing love under all circumstances, even under abuse, persecution, torture and in the face of death, is called in the Bible gold tried with fire. 1 Peter 1:7.

Such faith works by love to purify the soul (Gal. 5:6), and brings to the believer the victory of Christ which overcomes the world. 1 John 5:4, 5. This is the faith which thanks God and praises Him, even in adversity, thereby releasing the power of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation from sin to those who believe. Romans 1:16, 17. This is the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12), the gold which He freely offers to us so as to cure us of our lukewarmness. Revelation 3:18. He says to us “I counsel thee to buy of me *gold tried in the fire*”.

This faith of Jesus was made perfect through sufferings. Hebrews 2:10. In other words, in Christ the gold has been tried in the fire and brought to its greatest possible purity. Such faith therefore enables the believer to be “tried in the fire” and emerge victorious. Revelation 3:12.

In the Christian warfare, the battle to be won is the battle against self. At initial conversion, self is dethroned and love enthroned in the spirit of

the human soul. But deep in the conscious and unconscious minds are defects of character, the hereditary and acquired tendencies to serve self, defend self, assert self, depend on self, retaliate for the protection of human ego. All of these defects must be cleansed out of our minds and be replaced with the beautiful attributes of Divine love mentioned in 1 Cor. 13.

Only when the soul is thus cleansed of all the deep-seated defects of character, will the lovely character of Christ be fully reflected through the human soul.

The victory is the victory of Christ. He offers it to us as a free gift. It is not obtained by self-effort or by works. The victory is obtained by *faith through prayer and study of God's Word and through the various trials and temptations and crises of life*. The troubles and calamities of life are caused by sin, but are permitted by God and used by Him to show us the deep-seated defects in our souls, that we may repent, confess, and, by faith, receive deeper infillings of the righteousness of Christ. This refining work is being supervised by our High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary where, since 1844, Christ has been patiently performing the work of preparing His final generation of living saints. Laodicean lukewarmness has delayed this work for over a century, but Christ will at last achieve what the prophet Malachi foretold in Malachi 3:3, 4.

As we learn, believe, and receive the truth, our souls and spirits are cleansed of sin and filled with truth and righteousness until the character of Christ is fully reproduced in us. When this happens, then the Heavenly Sanctuary will be cleansed of our sin and the seal of God fixed in our foreheads. This means that, by our choice, the Holy Spirit will have fixed, with permanence, the righteousness of Christ within the human spirit and mind.

To this end, Jesus, our High Priest in the Most Holy Place, performs the work of "a refiner and purifier of silver." There are certain attributes of character which cannot be fully developed in redeemed human beings without trials, adversity, and fierce temptations. The Christian may read about patience, long-suffering, endurance and perseverance in the Bible, and think he is alright in these areas just by studying the Word. But Christ, our High Priest, will *permit* trials, adversity and temptations to come upon the believer to show him the deep seated defects of character in the soul, and provide him with the very experiences needed for the development of genuine divine patience, meekness, and humility.

The great men and women of God in the Bible all underwent this refining process by which they were brought to higher experiences in character

perfection, and closer intimacy with God through Christ by the Holy Spirit. **Christ Himself, the Captain of our salvation, was perfected in faith through sufferings. This faith He offers to us as a free gift. It is gold that has been purified in fire.** For us to fully reflect this faith of Jesus, we need suffering too. 1 Peter 1:3–12, Hebrews 2:10.

This brings us to a very important point. *Since he is surrendered completely to God, the Christian must thank God for, and praise Him in, adversity.* Rather than impulsively ask for deliverance from the adversity, the Christian ought to thank God and praise him for the refining work being done on him for the purpose of perfecting character. This is the mind of submissive faith, the faith of Christ that must be exercised in adversity in order for patience to be fully developed to the Christ-like standard. James 1:1–4, Romans 8:31–39.

So we see then that it is through believing and receiving the word of God, through trials and adversity, that the soul is cleansed of every defect of character and filled with the truth until the character of Christ is fully reproduced in and reflected through the sanctified soul. *This is the process of progressive submission to God and truth through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit through the Word.* At conversion, the overall general, basic submission occurs, but during sanctification the Christian learns, by study of the Word and adversity, to submit every detail of his life to God, and to ignore the flesh and its desires so completely that God through the indwelling Holy Spirit maintains absolute, constant, and full control of the life.

Trials God's Workmen

"Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God 'doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.' Lamentations 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is 'for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.' Hebrews 12:10. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

"The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed

down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.” — MB 10

“Obstacles to the advancement of the work of God will appear; but fear not. To the omnipotence of the King of kings, our covenant-keeping God unites the gentleness and care of a tender shepherd. Nothing can stand in His way. His power is absolute, and it is the pledge of the sure fulfillment of His promises to His people. He can remove all obstructions to the advancement of His work. He has means for the removal of every difficulty, that those who serve Him and respect the means He employs may be delivered. His goodness and love are infinite, and His covenant is unalterable.

“The plans of the enemies of His work may seem to be firm and well established, but He can overthrow the strongest of these plans, and in His own time and way He will do this, when He sees that our faith has been sufficiently tested and that we are drawing near to Him and making Him our counselor.” — 8T 10

“Trials will come upon us that are originated by the prince of evil. The enemy will contend for the life or the usefulness of the servants of God, and will seek to mar their peace as long as they remain in the world. But his power is limited. He may cause the furnace to be heated, but Jesus and holy angels watch the precious ore; and to the trusting Christian, grace will be found sufficient, and nothing but the worthless dross will be consumed. The fire kindled by the enemy can have no power to destroy the true gold.” — RH April 10, 1894

“Life is disciplinary. While in the world, the Christian will meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If injuries and insults are meekly borne, if insulting words are responded to by gentle answers, and oppressive acts by kindness, this is evidence that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart, that sap from the living Vine is flowing to the branches. We are in the school of Christ in this life, where we are to learn to be meek and lowly of heart; and in the day of final accounts we shall see that all the obstacles we meet, all the hardships and annoyances that we are called to bear, are practical lessons in the application of principles of Christian life. If well endured, they develop the

Christlike in the character and distinguish the Christian from the worldling.”
— 5T 344

The problems of suffering, persecution and death must be understood in the light of the great controversy between God and Satan. The simple fact is that the battle of the ages *cannot be won without sacrificial suffering by all of God's children*. This suffering will vary in degree from case to case, depending on the circumstances and the needs arising from such circumstances. For some of God's children, (for example: John The Baptist, Stephen and the other martyrs) the sacrifice has to be total. If a believer is not willing to give all that the controversy demands, then ultimate victory for the cause of God is delayed and time extended. In order to cultivate the kind of faith needed to be a martyr, i.e. to make the fullest possible sacrifice, *certain important principles must be known and understood by the last-day believer*.

First, God is never the cause of suffering, sickness, and death. These occur because of Satan's government of sin. For proof of this consider the following texts: James 1:13–17, John 10:10, Proverbs 12:28, John 1:4, 1 John 1:5, and Revelation 21:4. Sickness, suffering and death are caused by an antagonistic power. Satan is the *destroyer*. God is the *Restorer*.

Second, since God is protector, then suffering and disaster can only occur if he permits. There are three kinds of circumstances under which God permits suffering, sickness, or death.

1. Since Adam's sin, the whole world has passed under Satan's government of sin and “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. Since sin separates us from God (Isaiah 1:15), then because of Adam's sin, sickness, suffering and death have passed upon all men. Romans 5:12. Through God's grace, this first death usually comes slowly, thus giving us opportunity to seek God's salvation in Christ. See Lamentations 3:22 and Romans 5:17, 19, 21. In other words, all humans are exposed to the possibility and actuality of suffering, sickness and death because of the general effects of the sin problem, and also the specific outworking of the principle of cause and effect. The above may be termed as *the results of general wrath held in check by the workings of general grace*. See Psalm 90:1–12.
2. God's specific wrath has been exercised against certain individuals, groups or nations, and indeed the antediluvian world. This occurs

when the sinner reaches the point of complete rejection of all the grace offered by God, and *makes it clear that he does not want God's government at all*. Under such circumstances God withdraws His protection, and it is this withdrawal of His protection which is called *His wrath*. See Romans 1:18, 24, 28, Deuteronomy 31:16–18, and Deuteronomy 32:15–20.

3. The third circumstance is the important one which we want to carefully consider in this study:

In order to answer certain questions, prove certain claims, and win certain key issues in the great controversy, God may permit suffering, sickness, persecution, and death to befall his saints, not because of their sins but because they are righteous. He wants to prove the point that they will remain loyal to him under all circumstances. This kind of testing is necessary for the development of character to the highest possible level of perfection.

Christ's followers are not inducted into His army for the sole purpose of being recipients of temporal blessings, ease, prosperity and protection. All are saved to serve. **To be witnesses that God is *true, just, loving and righteous* and that His law is perfect and can be kept by man, under all circumstances, in his fallen flesh through faith in Christ and through being a partaker of the divine nature. Such a work cannot be done without their being partakers with Christ in his sufferings.**

Consider the following texts:

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake.” *Philippians 1:29.*

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulations worketh patience. And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” *Romans 5:3–5.*

“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable

fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”
Hebrews 12: 6, 7, 11.

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”. James 1:2–4

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Matthew 5:4, 10–12

Please remember, too, that the Godhead has had to suffer more than any of us in this great controversy. If there was any way in which God could have terminated the great controversy and established man’s salvation without either Christ or His children suffering and dying, He most certainly would have used it, *but there was no alternative*. God’s decision to solve the sin problem committed *Christ, and those who share in the blessings of redemption*, to whatever suffering and death is necessary to defeat the enemy. It is not a case of the end justifying the means. God is not sacrificing people in order to establish His honor and His kingdom. He is not the one who requires this sacrifice. He has to accept the simple fact that it is either *that way* or there is *no* solution to the sin problem. *No one can enter into the peace of God’s Sabbath rest unless he understands this principle, otherwise he will be seriously disturbed in mind and spirit when calamities and troubles befall him.*

Yes, troubles will come. Adversity, suffering, loss of loved ones, even the threat of death may be hurled at us by Satan’s government. But please remember that *God is not the cause of trouble*. If your life is fully surrendered to God, He may permit adversity in order to test, prove, and purify you, and develop your character. Always keep in mind the following passages: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but *God is faithful*, who *will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able*: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, *that ye may*

be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13, Romans 8:31–39, Romans 8:28, Romans 5:1–4, Hebrews 11:24–29, 35–40.

But the basic question is this: *Why must God permit Satan to bring suffering upon the righteous, to persecute and sometimes kill them?*

The answer to this question is found in a consideration of the basic issues at stake in the great controversy between Christ and Satan and the charges Satan leveled against God.

Here now is a list of the fundamental charges which Satan has brought up against God:

1. Satan has charged that God is selfish and oppressive.
2. Satan has charged that God claims *all* and *gives nothing*, that He requires the service of His creatures for His own glory but makes no sacrifice for their good.
3. Satan has charged that God’s law is a law of selfishness, and that God’s law is unnecessary.
4. Satan has charged that it is impossible for mankind to obey God’s law.
5. Satan has charged that God could not forgive the sinner.
6. Satan has charged that God is the author, the cause of sin, suffering and death, and that He should be regarded with fear for He is severe and tyrannical.

To propagate the above false charges, Satan has resorted to misrepresentation of the character of God and His government. Satan would have us believe that there is nothing really wrong with sin but with God, who kills us for choosing Satan’s government while claiming that He has given us freedom of choice. Satan claims that it is not possible for us to keep God’s law and that even if we keep it when conditions are favorable, we certainly cannot do so when conditions are unfavorable.

In order to answer these charges, the Godhead has had to undergo infinite sacrifice and great suffering, and God’s people too have to share in this suffering in order to prove God right and Satan wrong. God says that His Law can be kept (John 15:10; John 14:15; Matthew 19:17; Revelation 14:12; Matthew 5:48; 1 John 5:1–5), and to prove this point He allows Satan to throw all the pressure he can on the saints. Many have

gone before, like Job, John the Baptist, and Abel who kept God's law under the most severe pressure that Satan could then apply. *But for us in this last generation, Satan will be allowed to apply a quantity of pressure the likes of which have never been felt before, except by Christ. But thank God there will be a people who will stand firm for truth, who would die rather than sin, thus vindicating God's point that the law can be kept no matter how difficult conditions might be!*

It should also be understood that during the intense persecution of the final crisis, God's people will exhibit His harmless, self-sacrificing love, and will continue to love their persecutors even though the latter are about to kill them. Moreover, the saints will not take things into their own hands, but will allow God to have His way as Problem-solver even when it seems that He has forsaken them and left them to perish. *But victory will be theirs, thus proving that total submission to God's government is the only way to absolute success!*

"In the light of the Saviour's life, the hearts of all, even from the Creator to the prince of darkness, are revealed. Satan has represented God as selfish and oppressive, as claiming all, and giving nothing, as requiring the service of His creatures for His own glory, and making no sacrifice for their good. But the gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are 'thoughts of peace, and not of evil.' Jer. 29:11. It declares that while God's hatred of sin is as strong as death, His love for the sinner is stronger than death. Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed. Favor is heaped upon favor, gift upon gift. The whole treasury of heaven is open to those He seeks to save. Having collected the riches of the universe, and laid open the resources of infinite power, He gives them all into the hands of Christ, and says, All these are for man. Use these gifts to convince him that there is no love greater than Mine in earth or heaven. His greatest happiness will be found in loving Me.

"At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown." — DA 57

11

“Gold Tried With Fire”

PART 2

*F*ULL AND PERMANENT SURRENDER TO God as the Plan-maker involves the believer’s total submission to whatever the everlasting Father, in His infinite love and wisdom, may elect to send or permit. Often, that which the Lord allows His people to suffer is the opposite from what they would plan for themselves. If God had said to the youthful Joseph, “Sit down and draw up a plan for your future service to me,” He certainly would not have included a period of servitude in Egypt, followed by imprisonment in a foul dungeon.

Likewise, Daniel and his three friends would never have included a lifetime spent in Babylon when outlining their future. John the Baptist would not have provided for a Roman prison nor for beheading. The apostle Paul would not have chosen the infirmity of weak eyesight, and Job would not have thought of his possessions being swept away, his children annihilated, and his health broken down until he was suffering as few have ever suffered.

Human beings, because they would never plan these things for themselves nor for their beloved children, cherish the thought that God never permits such things to happen to them either. Despite clear evidence

that He does, some go so far as to say that the only thing that God will ever do for His children is bless them with health, prosperity, and life. They reason that because God is all-powerful and all-loving, He will never allow suffering and death to overtake His children unless their lack of faith prevents Him from exercising His will. Consequently, if a believer dies, or suffers ill-health or misfortune, they conclude that the only reason for his suffering is the presence of unbelief or hidden sin or both. Thus, in their eyes, every Christian who has died down through the ages, including the mighty apostles and prophets, is judged as wanting in faith and righteousness.

While such serious error is maintained, it is impossible for God to truly achieve His deep, wonderful and yet mysterious purpose in the believers who consequently fail to enter into His rest. Losses, suffering, and bereavement for which their belief provides no place will confuse and trouble them, leading them to doubt the goodness, mercy, and love of their heavenly Father. They will feel that He is working against them, not for them, that He is not a covenant-keeping God, and that He makes promises and does not keep them. Until this problem is solved by the correction of this erroneous thinking, true peace and rest will not be found by God's children.

It is true that God is all-loving and all-powerful, and that He does not wish to see His children suffer and die. He wants a living company of believers through whom He can finish the work, and eventually He will have such a group.

But in the meantime, it is not a question of what God wants, but of what the great controversy demands. The simple fact is that the battle of the ages cannot be won without sacrificial suffering by all of God's children. This will vary in degree from case to case, depending on the circumstances and the needs arising from them. For some of God's children, (John the Baptist, Lazarus, and the martyrs being prime examples) the sacrifice has to be total. If a believer is not willing to give all that the controversy demands, then the ultimate victory for the cause is delayed and time extended.

The presence of adversity and suffering in Paul's life did not disturb his peace for a moment. Understanding God's character and His working, he recognized that they occupied an essential place in his service to God and his fellowmen. He knew their value in developing Christian experience and the nature of the witness he could give only under these conditions.

He knew that he was afforded a privilege which not even the angels have. Therefore, he not only accepted these trials restfully, but actually rejoiced under suffering. This attitude will be shared by all who enter into God's Sabbath rest.

These principles are clearly revealed in the story of Job. There was an occasion when Satan, as the prince of this world, presented himself at a council meeting of the sons of God. Jehovah appealed to him to explain how Job's perfect obedience fit in with Satan's claim that the law could not be kept by created beings.

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. 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?” Job 1:6–8

It was in love for Satan that God addressed him thus. The evil one consistently argued that the law of God could not be kept and it was not made for man's blessing and benefit, but was a yoke of bondage designed to chain all created beings to the despotic will of God.

Before Satan's rebellion, God's ways had never been challenged. Now that they were, peace could not return to the universe until the issues were resolved to everyone's complete satisfaction. As this could not be done by declaration alone, the nature of the controversy demanded that a demonstration be given by someone living not in the perfect environment of Paradise, but in this sinful world. Job was such a man.

The faithful patriarch was serving God under conditions far more difficult than those experienced by dwellers in the sinless realms. Daily harassed by temptations and handicapped by weak, fallen, sinful, mortal flesh, Job continually witnessed to the certainty that God's law was made for the blessing and protection of all His creatures.

Therefore, when God directed Satan to consider Job's obedience, He was asking him what further proof he needed to end the argument.

Making no attempt to deny his own former obedience or that of the sinless angels and other fallen beings still loyal to God, Satan conceded

that Job was obedient. “It is true that Job obeys you, but it is not for nothing,” was his rejoinder.

“Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?”

“Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

“But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Job 1:9, 10, 11.

Here, Satan precisely spelled out his position which was not, as one might expect, that the Law cannot be kept at all, but that it can be kept only under limited circumstances. Satan argued that, favored by prosperity and protection, Job could and did keep the commandments, but if those conditions were changed to adversity and suffering, Job would also change to wickedness. This is the message continually projected through works of fiction where the good obey the law until they believe it must be broken in order to destroy the evil-doer.

There is no other way Satan can explain his own faultless righteousness up till the time he fell, and the similar faithfulness of the angels who are still loyal to God, than by arguing that obedience can be rendered only under limited, favorable circumstances. Facts which cannot be denied, he seeks to explain away. He is extremely skilful at this. Those who would fully enter into God’s Sabbath rest must be familiar with his devisings and know how to counter them.

As the controversy over Job waxed hotter, Satan clarified his stand still further through his spokesman, Eliphaz the Temanite and his friends. Eliphaz claimed to have received his information by direct inspiration from God.

“Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

“In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.

“Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

“Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

“It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, . . . ”
Job 4:12–16.

Thus Eliphaz claimed to speak by inspiration, but it was satanic, not divine. God denied being the source of his inspiration when, at the end of the drama, He charged Eliphaz with speaking that which was not true regarding Himself. If God was not the source, then Satan certainly was. Thus we can be assured that Eliphaz was Satan’s agent when he said:

“Can mortal man be righteous before God? can a man be pure before his Maker? Even in His servants He puts no trust, and His angels He charges with error; how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth.” Job 4:17–19 RSV

The key element in the charges leveled here is that God puts *no trust* in His servants or His angels. The great deceiver contends that God can only expect obedience from His subjects if He keeps them within a limited context. Outside of that, He cannot *trust* them to remain faithful to Him. Thus, Satan sought to justify his own separation from God’s government. He argued that for untold millenniums, God had withheld information which He could not trust him to know. “Unenlightened” during that period, he had served God with undivided attention. However, once he had “uncovered” God’s carefully guarded “secrets,” he was left with no option but to rebel.

He then decided that the only possible course he could follow was to sever all connection with God while endeavoring, in “loving, self-sacrificing consideration,” for the still loyal angels to enlighten their minds to the real character of a “deceiving, mistrustful” God. He claimed that the only reason why the sinless angels that were still in heaven continued their allegiance, was that they had not yet learned, and would not be taught, the real facts. They were still, Satan contended, in the context of prosperity and ignorance where they would continue to keep the law, but let them be transferred to another situation such as that in which he now found himself, and they would rebel just as he had.

While the loyal angels would not be “delivered” by this philosophy, Eve was prepared to listen and to accept it. Satan successfully presented the argument that God did not trust her, which he said was proved by

God's giving both her and her husband false information about the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan's approach to her is a clear revelation of his arguments against God's government.

On gaining her attention at the forbidden tree, he immediately raised the question of God's prohibition concerning it.

"And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Genesis 3:1.

She was quick to reply that they could eat of all but one. This had been prohibited because to eat of it was to die. Satan now came right to his point, declaring that this was not the real reason at all. He said: "Ye shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4.

This was to accuse God of being a liar, which, in turn, meant that He did not trust them. It was a declaration that here was a marvelous tree with the magical power to elevate them to equality with God, a development which God feared more than any other. God, Satan insinuated, could not trust them to know this and still refrain from partaking of the forbidden fruit, so He had told them a lie to prevent them from touching it.

Thus Satan aimed to lead Adam and Eve down the same pathway his own footsteps had trod. His objective was to persuade them that they only served God blindly because God, mistrusting them, had been careful to hide the real truth about Himself from them. Satan was jubilant, for he was thus provided with what he considered indisputable proof that his contentions were correct.

But the eternal Father took the decidedly different view that Satan had not proved his point at all. It was true that Adam and Eve had accepted his arguments and taken their place on his side, but this did not prove that the assertions were correct. All that their decisions showed was that, if a person is persuaded by Satan's sophistries, he will cease to walk with God. Their action had not disproved that the law could be kept under evil circumstances as well as good.

Nor did their course give real support to the charge that God had withheld information because He could not *trust* them with it. God had kept back no light whatsoever. It was made fully available to them as it is to us, though no one has as yet attained to its total knowledge and application. That will come in due time. One of the great blessings accorded to God's children is the opportunity to be ever growing in knowledge and

understanding. Eternity itself will not exhaust the fields of study open to the redeemed and the unfallen worlds.

When God was confronted with Satan's lying accusations at the meeting where Job's obedience became an issue, He knew that, being perfectly correct in His position, He needed to make no concessions to Satan. His counsels and judgments were made in absolute righteousness and therefore are immutable. If this were not so, then the everlasting Father would never have accepted Satan's proposition that he be permitted to place Job in a different situation from that where God had put him. Satan had boldly claimed that Job would continue obedience only while enjoying special protection and prosperity, but if this were swept away, the patriarch would curse God to His face.

But God knew His principles were right and that He could trust Job to demonstrate them even though, to provide the witness needed, Job would have to pay a fearful price in loss of loved ones, health, and personal possessions. Accordingly, Jehovah confidently submitted Job to the devil's power. Satan then removed Job very quickly from protected prosperity to tragic loss and suffering. None of this was the result of Job's own sins, nor was it the work of God, even though His cause was greatly blessed by Job's sterling witness.

Job's fortitude and faithfulness in suffering provided the witness which confirmed God's position and thus vindicated His character. It was the means whereby the required end was achieved.

This gives the appearance that the end justified the means, but a little thought will show that this was not so. God never operates by this principle. He uses only those procedures which are right in themselves. Even though we might not be able to understand the righteousness of God's ways, we must believe that they are righteous for the simple reason that He operates in no other way. Therefore, God's permitting Satan to afflict Job was entirely righteous and true. No fault can be charged against Him for that. God's children are to believe this, no matter what arguments may be presented to the contrary, nor how convincingly every appearance may declare otherwise. The only alternative is to reject God as a liar and cast ourselves on Satan's side.

There was no unrighteousness with God, no resorting to unjust means simply because the end justified them. What God and Job did in partnership was but the outworking of righteous principles—the law of

self-sacrificing, self-denying, and self-abnegating love. This is the law of life for both heaven and earth. In the school above, as the depths in the plan of salvation become clearer, 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.” 1 Timothy 6:16.

When sin entered the universe, it rejected the principle of service to others no matter what the cost to self, and instituted the rule of self-exaltation irrespective of what it would cost others. From that point on, each dweller in the universe has manifested one or the other of these two principles.

When the character of Christ is formed in the believer, the spirit of self-sacrificing love becomes the operating principle of his life. As he comes to understand the issues in the great controversy, he knows that the situation, not God, will demand considerable self-sacrifice in the form of loss, suffering, and even death. Willingly, he pays the price, knowing that it will bring blessing to others and to himself.

God will never deny His children the high privilege, blessing, and education obtained by living out the law of self-sacrificing love. Therefore, when the circumstances arose which provided Job with the opportunity to suffer for the good of others and the cause he loved, the Lord would not, by maintaining a hedge of protection around him, withhold from His servant the weightiest trust and the highest honor—the gift of fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.

It is when these principles are understood that the peace of the believer is preserved, no matter how severe the trial that God permits him to bear. Therefore, Satan continually seeks to rob the believer of these principles so that he can prevent him from entering into God’s rest. In the book of Job, his tactics stand exposed for all to see in their true light.

Satan was determined to destroy Job’s peace. He attempted to achieve this by convincing Job that his troubles were the direct result of his own sinfulness, not because Satan was afflicting him. Acting through three of his agents who, as might be expected, were “recognized authorities” in religious matters, he worked to impress up on the patriarch the conviction that God was wrathfully afflicting him because of his “great personal

wickedness.” Their arguments were based on the over-simplified logic that, as sin causes sickness and sickness brings death, then wherever there is suffering, there must be sin whether it is visible or not. As Job was greatly afflicted, they reasoned that his sin must be exceedingly bad.

Here is a sample of their argument as Eliphaz expressed it:

“If one ventures a word with you, will you be offended?

*Yet who can keep from speaking? Behold, you have instructed many,
and you have strengthened the weak hands.*

*Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, and you have
made firm the feeble knees.*

*But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; it touches you,
and you are dismayed.*

*Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your
ways your hope?*

*Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were
the upright cut off?*

*As I have seen, those who plough iniquity and sow trouble reap the
same.*

*By the breath of God they perish, and by the blast of His anger they
are consumed.” Job 4:2–9. RSV*

Under Satan’s inspiration and direction, the men continued to press these arguments on Job, and he emphatically refused to accept them. They went so far as to say, “Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.” Job 11:6. RSV

As usual, the enemy presented one side of the truth to support his cause. It is the truth that “... those who plough iniquity and sow trouble reap the same,” but it is not true that the *innocent* never perish and the *upright* are never cut off. The real truth is that, while the wicked do perish because of their sinfulness, in many cases the children of God die because they are righteous. In fact, the more righteous they are, the greater is the possibility that they may be called to serve God’s cause by making the supreme sacrifice.

These facts and the reasons for them must be thoroughly understood if God’s people are to maintain an experience of Sabbath rest in the face of adversity and death, for they are an essential part of the Christian

warfare. Without this knowledge, His people will fail Him when He needs them most.

A vital factor in Job's success as God's witness was the awareness that both the wicked and the righteous perish; the wicked as a consequence of their wickedness and the righteous because of their righteousness. Job stated his convictions as follows:

"It is all one; therefore I say, He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.

When disaster brings sudden death, He mocks at the calamity of the innocent." Job 9:22, 23. RSV

Job's certain knowledge that sickness, suffering, bereavement, and death are not reserved for the wicked alone, but have a very important purpose in the Christian warfare, enabled him to rest in the assurance of his standing with his heavenly Father. Despite the incessant urging of his "friends" that his suffering could only indicate that he was an exceedingly wicked person, he steadily testified to the contrary, for he was a righteous man who had kept God's commandments. Some would interpret his testimony as self-righteous boasting, but this was not so. It was a sweet and living testimony of what God had done for, in, and through him. It was not self-praise, but vindication of God.

"And Job again took up his discourse, and said: As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter; as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God in my nostrils; my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit.

Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go, my heart does not reproach me for any of my days."
Job 27:1-6. RSV

Every Christian needs to know what Job understood, that while sin brings sickness, suffering, and death, it is not the only cause of such problems. Satan is able to afflict these things on even the most righteous person, and there are times when God permits him to do it. Job's case clearly proves that. God's personal vindication of the stand taken by Job gives further confirmation of this.

“There is wickedness in our world, but all the suffering is not the result of a perverted course of life. Job is brought distinctly before us as a man whom the Lord allowed Satan to afflict. The enemy stripped him of all he possessed; his family ties were broken; his children were taken from him. For a time his body was covered with loathsome sores, and he suffered greatly. His friends came to comfort him, but they tried to make him see that he was responsible, by his sinful course, for his afflictions. But he defended himself, and denied the charge, declaring, Miserable comforters are ye all. By seeking to make him guilty before God, and deserving of His punishment, they brought a grievous test upon him, and represented God in a false light; but Job did not swerve from his loyalty, and God rewarded His faithful servant. 3BC 1140

The same error promoted by Job’s “comforters” was taught by the Jews in Christ’s day. It came to light when Jesus healed the blind man of whom the disciples, reflecting erroneous Jewish theology, asked, “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.” John 9:2.

“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. Isa. 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.” — DA 471

Although Job's friends did not understand these principles, he certainly did. Thus he represented God's side of the controversy while they took Satan's side. Throughout the time they were together, this was the issue contested between them. In the end, God spoke the final word by giving His endorsement to Job's stand and His condemnation of the position taken by his "friends".

Had those men been successful in convincing Job that all suffering is the result of one's own sins, they would have robbed him of his Sabbath rest. Fortunately, they were not able to do this, and the patriarch was thus able to maintain his righteous relationship with God.

The story of Job plainly demonstrates that while it is vitally important to confess sin when it is a part of us, it is equally important to refuse to confess it when it is not there. Satan delights in bringing before us sin we have already confessed and put away, urging us to confess it all over again. To do this is to disbelieve those promises by which God assures us that He has taken the sin and placed it far away in the sanctuary.

But why does a God of love who has all the power necessary to protect His children from their enemy, actually allow Satan to do these terrible things?

There are several reasons. The one best understood is that God uses trials as workmen to fashion the character after the Divine similitude and thus fit the soul for heaven. Many, if not most, of these trials are brought upon us by our own foolish courses of action, yet they serve to reveal weaknesses and deficiencies which need to be corrected. Such revelations, even though they come the hard way, are a blessing and should be regarded as such.

In this study, more attention will be given to another highly important reason for Satan's being permitted to strike some of God's people with disease and death. It is the particular reason which applied in the cases of Job, John the Baptist, and Lazarus.

God does not require His people to suffer, and He only permits suffering and death because the terms of the great controversy require these sacrifices. There is no alternative, for the victory cannot otherwise be gained.

In the great controversy, God and Satan occupy positions in opposition to each other. The devil's efforts are concentrated on casting God in false light, especially in regard to His holy law. It is Satan's claim that the law can only be kept within a certain limited context, outside of which

disobedience is the only possibility. God, denying this, affirms that under no circumstances or conditions is law-breaking justified or necessary.

Unfortunately, this controversy cannot be settled by declaration. It had to be submitted to actual contest in which both sides, under the scrutiny of all created beings, demonstrated the real nature of their claims. It is amazing that the sheer authority of God's word did not obviate this necessity, but the very fact that it did not, clearly proves that the problem could not be solved in this way. Even now, after almost six thousand years of demonstration and counter-demonstration, the issue is not yet fully and finally resolved.

God cannot provide this demonstration Himself. He must have created beings through whom it can be given. They need to be in a position where they can experience prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, life and death. Obviously, the only beings who qualify are those who dwell on this earth. To illustrate this point, imagine that God has advertised for voluntary witnesses that He is the God of truth and righteousness when He says that the law can be kept in any situation. Joyfully, a bright and holy angel steps forward and indicates his wish to be such a witness.

God says to him, "I must ask you a few questions to see if you qualify. Firstly, are you able to experience poverty and hardship?"

To this, the angel has to reply in the negative as he must to each of the following questions.

"Can you become sick?"

"Can you face death?"

"Can you be physically and mentally tortured for your faith?"

The angel's honest replies leave God with no option but to kindly refuse his offer on the grounds that he does not qualify.

In this respect, human beings are accorded a privilege the angels will never know. They can provide a witness for God which the sinless, heavenly host, being completely separated from poverty, distress, disease, persecution, and death, can never give. What makes this privilege more meaningful is that it is so essential to the cause of God that the great controversy cannot be finished without it. This is why God declares that we are His witnesses, called to demonstrate by declaration and demonstration that He is Truth.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I

am He: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

“I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour.

“I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange God among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.” Isaiah 43:10–12.

Unfortunately, the average professed Christian thinks that witnessing is nothing more than *speaking* in God’s support, just as political supporters make speeches in favor of their candidates. If this were so, God’s children would never need to be placed in distressing situations. But, while preaching the Word is a vital part of the Christian witness, it is not the most important. What God requires more than anything else are lives which prove by demonstration that the law can be kept to advantage, no matter what the physical circumstances may be.

It is for this reason that the Lord permits Satan to afflict His children from time to time. This is why He allowed Satan to sweep away Job’s possessions, kill his children, and take away his health. Under these terms, John the Baptist perished, Lazarus was stricken with a fatal illness, and the martyrs faithfully demonstrated that the awful pressure of persecution and death could not change their service to God. These people all understood to a greater or lesser extent that this is what they were in the world for — to be God’s witnesses — not just to be the recipients of His salvation.

The better their understanding of these principles and the deeper their consecration to this kind of service, the more stable they were in maintaining an untroubled peace through even the darkest, most trying hours. In fact, they found that they could rejoice because they knew they were privileged to bear a witness vital to God’s cause and their own salvation which even the angels could not give. God’s permitting Satan to afflict them was no mystery to them. It was simply a part of that impeccable plan whereby God will eventually terminate the reign of sin. They rejoiced in surrendering their bodies to any suffering God permitted as necessary to achieve these objectives, and this was why they confounded their persecutors by going to their deaths singing.

The final generation of Christians must learn to walk in their footsteps in order to accomplish their Divinely appointed mission. Such an awakening among God’s children will elevate their thinking above the

low level of ignorance that gives no place for God's purposes in permitting Satan to afflict them with disease and death. When this enlightenment is experienced, they will sweetly rest in the Lord's personal assurance that

"God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him." — DA 224–225

Needless to say, it takes time even for Christians to shake off the erroneous concepts gained in Satan's school, and awaken to the deep and beautiful principles of which God's kingdom is composed. In fact, to many the workings of God's government are a mystery which tend to fill them with the unrest of doubt and perplexity.

"The mysterious providence which permits the righteous to suffer persecution at the hand of the wicked, has been a cause of great perplexity to many who are weak in faith. Some are even ready to cast away their confidence in God, because he suffers the basest of men to prosper, while the best and purest are afflicted and tormented by their cruel power. How, it is asked, can One who is just and merciful, and who is also infinite in power, tolerate such injustice and oppression? This is a question with which we have nothing to do. God has given us sufficient evidence of his love, and we are not to doubt his goodness because we cannot understand the workings of his providence. Said the Saviour to his disciples, foreseeing the doubts that would press upon their souls in days of trial and darkness, 'Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.' [JOHN 15:20.] Jesus suffered for us more than any of his followers can be made to suffer through the cruelty of wicked men. Those who are called to endure torture and martyrdom, are but following in the steps of God's dear Son.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.' [PETER 3:9.] He does not forget or neglect his children; but he permits the wicked to reveal their true character, that none who desire to do his will may be deceived concerning them. Again, the righteous are placed in the furnace of affliction, that they themselves may be purified; that their example may convince others of the reality of faith and godliness; and also that their consistent course may condemn the ungodly and unbelieving.

"God permits the wicked to prosper, and to reveal their enmity against him, that when they shall have filled up the measure of their iniquity, all may see

his justice and mercy in their utter destruction. The day of his vengeance hastens, when all who have transgressed his law and oppressed his people will meet the just recompense of their deeds; when every act of cruelty or injustice toward God's faithful ones will be punished as though done to Christ himself. — GC 47–48

A satisfactory grasp of these principles can be acquired only by deep and sustained study of the issues lying at the heart of the great controversy. It is encouraging to know that such investigation will prove to be a mighty factor in establishing God's Sabbath rest in the soul. The trials of life will then pass from the realm of mystery into an area of meaningful and beautiful purpose. What has previously been cause for discouragement, doubt, and repining, now becomes cause for the deepest joy and holy gratitude.

John the Baptist learned these truths most clearly while in Herod's prison. He had faithfully performed his Divinely appointed mission only to be rewarded, so it seemed, by being left to languish in a Roman dungeon. Satan saw the opportunity to bombard him with doubts about Christ's mission and therefore his own work.

“The life of John had been one of active labor, and the gloom and inaction of his prison life weighed heavily upon him. As week after week passed, bringing no change, despondency and doubt crept over him. His disciples did not forsake him. They were allowed access to the prison, and they brought him tidings of the works of Jesus, and told how the people were flocking to Him. But they questioned why, if this new teacher was the Messiah, He did nothing to effect John's release. How could He permit His faithful herald to be deprived of liberty and perhaps of life?” — DA 214

John's disciples revealed a deficiency of knowledge that is so common to God's children. They did not think in terms of serving God through suffering and death. This was particularly understandable in their case because of the false concepts they cherished in regard to Christ's kingdom. Consistent with their ideas about the anticipated Messianic reign was their expectation that Christ would deliver John from prison, seeing He had the power to do so. If they had received God's light on this subject, they would have encouraged John by assuring him the only reason God had permitted Satan to place him in a Roman dungeon and keep him there, was to work out a very wonderful purpose in advancing the cause they loved so much. Instead of being restless with doubt, uncertainty, and troublesome

questions about the character and mission of Christ, they would have rested sweetly and happily in God's will.

"These questions were not without effect. Doubts which otherwise would never have arisen were suggested to John. Satan rejoiced to hear the words of these disciples, and to see how they bruised the soul of the Lord's messenger. Oh, how often those who think themselves the friends of a good man, and who are eager to show their fidelity to him, prove to be his most dangerous enemies! How often, instead of strengthening his faith, their words depress and dishearten!" — DA 215

John's own misunderstanding of the Messiah's mission led him to agree, at least in part, with the sentiments of his disciples.

"Like the Saviour's disciples, John the Baptist did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom. He expected Jesus to take the throne of David; and as time passed, and the Saviour made no claim to kingly authority, John became perplexed and troubled. He had declared to the people that in order for the way to be prepared before the Lord, the prophecy of Isaiah must be fulfilled; the mountains and hills must be brought low, the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain. He had looked for the high places of human pride and power to be cast down. He had pointed to the Messiah as the One whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor, who would gather the wheat into His garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Like the prophet Elijah, in whose spirit and power he had come to Israel, he looked for the Lord to reveal Himself as a God that answereth by fire.

"In his mission the Baptist had stood as a fearless reprover of iniquity, both in high places and in low. He had dared to face King Herod with the plain rebuke of sin. He had not counted his life dear unto himself, that he might fulfill his appointed work. And now from his dungeon he watched for the Lion of the tribe of Judah to cast down the pride of the oppressor, and to deliver the poor and him that cried. But Jesus seemed to content Himself with gathering disciples about Him, and healing and teaching the people. He was eating at the tables of the publicans, while every day the Roman yoke rested more heavily upon Israel, while King Herod and his vile paramour worked their will, and the cries of the poor and suffering went up to heaven.

"To the desert prophet all this seemed a mystery beyond his fathoming. There were hours when the whisperings of demons tortured his spirit,

and the shadow of a terrible fear crept over him. Could it be that the long-hoped-for Deliverer had not yet appeared? Then what meant the message that he himself had been impelled to bear? John had been bitterly disappointed in the result of his mission. He had expected that the message from God would have the same effect as when the law was read in the days of Josiah and of Ezra (2 Chronicles 34; Nehemiah 8, 9); that there would follow a deep-seated work of repentance and returning unto the Lord. For the success of this mission his whole life had been sacrificed. Had it been in vain?" — DA 215–216

There was no real need for John to have suffered this anguish except that he had not been entirely delivered from the erroneous teachings so long promulgated by the Jewish leaders. But he was wise enough not to compound his problem by discussing it with his disciples. John would not discuss his doubts and anxieties with his companions. He determined to send a message of inquiry to Jesus.

He entrusted this to two of his disciples who came to Christ with the question,

"Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"

Matthew 11:3

Christ did not answer them by declaration, but by demonstration. He asked them to observe His work during the entire day. All that they saw, they took back to the lonely prisoner who thereby gained a fresh and more accurate understanding of the character and work of Christ. When John saw that his own life of self-sacrificing service was but a reflection of the spirit and work of Christ, he realized that the Master would build a very different kingdom from that which was generally anticipated.

"The principle of the Baptist's own life of self-abnegation was the principle of the Messiah's kingdom. John well knew how foreign all this was to the principles and hopes of the leaders in Israel. That which was to him convincing evidence of Christ's divinity would be no evidence to them. They were looking for a Messiah who had not been promised. John saw that the Saviour's mission could win from them only hatred and condemnation. He, the forerunner, was but drinking of the cup which Christ Himself must drain to its dregs." — DA 218

The nature which the Holy Spirit had formed in John was responding to Christ's nature and delivering him from false concepts of the Saviour's mission. By beholding he was changed more into the Divine likeness, and

as he thus stepped onto higher ground. A warm response to these holy influences flowed from within him.

It came in the form of a consecration to God larger in dimension than any he had known before. The nature of that fresh and living dedication is worthy of close study, for it is a clear revelation of the direction in which a more accurate understanding of God's ways will take us.

"Understanding more clearly now the nature of Christ's mission, he yielded himself to God for *life or for death*, as should best serve the interests of the cause he loved." — DA 218

This is a true Christian's committal to living service. He does not choose his future. He does not set his heart on never being sick, of always being delivered from suffering and death. He recognizes that he is God's witness, called to manifest righteousness under whatever conditions the Lord may choose for him. He may serve God until he is very old as did Moses and Abraham, or he might die violently at a relatively early age as did John the Baptist. He could even be called to spend time in slavery and in prison as did Joseph, or serve in royal halls as did Daniel and his companions. He may be unsung and unknown or famous as were the disciples and the great Bible heroes of the Old and New Testaments. If he is one of the 144,000 he will, like Enoch and Elijah, be translated to heaven without seeing death.

Just as in the marriage ceremony, contracting couples promise to love, honor, and cherish in sickness and in health, in prosperity or adversity, and through life until death, so the true Christian offers himself in service to God on the same terms. It is God who decides which.

Under no circumstances is it given to man to choose where or how he will serve God, now or in the future. These decisions only the Master Architect can make, for He alone knows what will prosper the work and what will hinder it. Undoubtedly, all would prefer to serve God with a long and prosperous life, but, should this be the lot of all, the witness essential to the successful termination of sin's reign would never be given. Some must suffer and die for the cause, their work being just as important as that performed by those called to give a long life of service. The short period spent by John in active labor was no less vital than the long term given by Moses.

Only that life which is fully submitted to God's choice of health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, life or death, conforms to the principle of God's Sabbath rest. Such a submissive spirit can be maintained only when the believer intelligently understands and accepts that he is God's witness upon whom Satan may be permitted to bring afflictions, sickness, adversity, bereavement, and death. It is incumbent upon all God's professed followers to comprehend these principles and live by them, for if they do not, they will most certainly follow the other alternative of seeking to plan God's work for Him. This repudiates the Sabbath rest principles and sets up the papacy in heart, life, and practice.

It would have been very easy for God to have saved John the Baptist from Herod's prison. His ability to do so was demonstrated a few years later when Peter was released from his cell in the middle of the night. Christ's forerunner could have been delivered in like manner, but he was left to perish because God specifically chose to permit that fate to overtake him.

God's reasons for leaving John to perish did not include any unfaithfulness on John's part, for there is no record of sin against the prophet. God permitted Satan to smite John with suffering and death for the same reason and on the same terms that He allowed Satan to strip Job of children, possessions, and health. To both men was granted the marvelous privilege of bearing witness to God's truthful position that the law could be kept, no matter what the physical conditions in which one was placed.

The testimony of John's faithfulness to the end served God's cause far better than if he had been delivered from his dark dungeon. The time was to come when thousands of believers would die for the truth during the Dark Ages. As they endured torture and faced execution, they were buoyed by the remembrance that John had died under like circumstances, meriting and receiving Christ's personal testimony to his dedicated and unblemished service. Knowing this, those who perished under papal domination were able to meet Satan's lying accusations, aware that they died not because they were transgressors of God's law, but because they were faithful to it.

"Jesus did not interpose to deliver His servant. He knew that John would bear the test. Gladly would the Saviour have come to John, to brighten the dungeon gloom with His own presence. But He was not to place Himself in the hands of enemies and imperil His own mission. Gladly would He

have delivered His faithful servant. But for the sake of thousands who in after years must pass from prison to death, John was to drink the cup of martyrdom. As the followers of Jesus should languish in lonely cells, or perish by the sword, the rack, or the fagot, apparently forsaken by God and man, what a stay to their hearts would be the thought that John the Baptist, to whose faithfulness Christ Himself had borne witness, had passed through a similar experience!

“Satan was permitted to cut short the earthly life of God’s messenger; but that life which ‘is hid with Christ in God,’ the destroyer could not reach. Col. 3:3. He exulted that he had brought sorrow upon Christ, but he had failed of conquering John. Death itself only placed him forever beyond the power of temptation. In this warfare, Satan was revealing his own character. Before the witnessing universe he made manifest his enmity toward God and man.

“Though no miraculous deliverance was granted John, he was not forsaken. He had always the companionship of heavenly angels, who opened to him the prophecies concerning Christ, and the precious promises of Scripture. These were his stay, as they were to be the stay of God’s people through the coming ages. To John the Baptist, as to those that came after him, was given the assurance, ‘Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end.’ Matt. 28:20, R. V., margin.

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. ‘Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.’ Phil. 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor.” — DA 224–225

A distinction must be made between afflictions which come upon the individual because of his iniquity and those which the Lord permits Satan to impose upon the righteous. For the most part, God promises to heal the former, but the latter will not be taken away until the test is complete. Thus, Christians must be able to distinguish between evils which come upon them because of their sins and those which come because of their

righteousness. They will then know exactly how to relate to either when they come.

It is because we are in the world as God's faithful witnesses that He does not always answer the prayer for physical restoration or for relief from material hardship with the same immediacy accorded prayers pleading for deliverance from sin.

"In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin." — DA 266

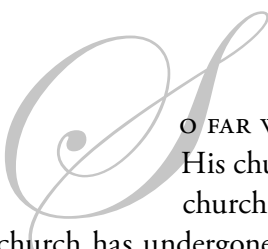
What is God's justification for making this distinction?

Very simply, it is because we can never give a witness of obedience without deliverance from sin, whereas, at times, we actually need to remain in a situation of adversity or sickness in order to testify by demonstration that the law can still be obeyed under those circumstances.

The untarnished beauty of perfect Sabbath rest is the wonderful experience awaiting all who come to understand, accept, and live out these principles. Perplexities will vanish and they will find a plain path before their feet. They will truly be able to rejoice in suffering, knowing that, provided it is not the result of their own disobedience, they are accorded the privilege of being God's witnesses on a level unknown even to the holy angels. If every one of God's children were totally committed to this quality of service, how soon the end would come!

12

The Church and the Mystery of Prayer

 SO FAR WE HAVE STUDIED the glorious victory of Christ for His church. We have also seen that the remnant of the true church will have to undergo intense suffering as the true church has undergone throughout history. Christ invites us to overcome as He overcame (Revelation 3:21), and offers to us His victory as a free gift. 1 Corinthians 15:57; Ephesians 2:4–10. He also offers us as a gift the privilege of suffering for His sake. Philippians 1:29.

The *time* of preparation is *now*. The final crisis will not allow us time to prepare *then* so we must be preparing *now*. How does the church prepare now for the coming crisis? The answer is *through communion with God by prayer and study of his Word, thereby surrendering fully to him and receiving, by His Spirit, the full infilling of the victory of Christ. Prayer-preparation is an absolute on-going necessity.*

Prayer: A Divine Mystery

God is omnipotent and omniscient. Could not He who created the universe by His word accomplish His purposes without involving puny man? Then why did He devise the plan of prayer. Why can He do nothing in the realm

of human redemption apart from human cooperation through prayer and faith? Matthew 13:58.

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; and their own way have I recompensed upon their heads.”
Ezekiel 22:30–31.

What a mysterious passage! Here we see God seeking to save the nation during a time of national apostasy. But, strangely, He is “helpless” without a man. If no one will pray, God cannot spare the nation. Why should He be dependent upon the prayers of a man in order to save the nation from the recompense of “its own-way.” If He yearned to show mercy, why did He not exercise His supreme sovereignty and do so, regardless of the prayers of any man?

That He will do nothing in the realm of human redemption, since its inception, outside of this scheme of prayer and faith, is indicated by God’s many pressing invitations to pray in His Word. He not only invites us to exercise this privilege, He entreats us, He importunes, He urges, He even begs us to pray. One translator has paraphrased Matthew 7:7 thus: “Ask, I ask you to ask; seek, I entreat you to seek; knock, I urge you to knock.” *Evidently He will do nothing without our prayers.*

In Matthew 9:38, God commands us, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.” He is Himself the Lord of the harvest. The harvest is His. The laborers are His. Why should He stand “helplessly” while urging men to pray reapers into their fields? Why does He send forth laborers only in answer to the prayers of the redeemed?

Furthermore, He has bound Himself unequivocally to answer. God’s promises to answer prayer are absolute. Here are some examples. Read them. John 14:13–14; John 15:7; John 16:23–24; 1 John 5:14; 15; Philippians 4:6, 7. These are “unconditional” promises, that is, no conditions are attached which constitute a “dodge” on God’s part. In other words, there are no conditions which are not fair or which are not within the reasonable capacity of a truly dedicated child of God. The condition of abiding in Him, and His words abiding in us, is possible for any ordinary, earnest,

and sincere born-again believer. God does not lay down conditions because He is seeking to avoid the risk involved in making such sweeping promises. Oh no! He is not that kind of Person. The conditions He gives us are meant to bring us into harmony with the “circuit of beneficence” so that His blessing may flow to us and through us to others! The scheme of prayer, so far as God is concerned, is foolproof. His part is already done. While His promise to answer prayer is always circumscribed by His will, this is in no sense a dodge on God’s part since any truly *yielded* child of God never wills anything but God’s will.

Therefore, if God is not dodging, then the entire responsibility prayerlessness or ineffective prayer falls entirely upon for us.

The church is the Body of Christ. He is the Head. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul compares the church to the human body. Decisions are made in the head but are implemented or carried out by the parts of the body. For example, a man decides to visit his neighbor. The decision occurs in his head (brain), but that decision is implemented by his feet as he walks to his neighbor’s house. So it is with Christ and His church. God in Christ makes the decisions, but the responsibility for implementing those decisions upon earth He has placed upon the shoulders of His church. The proof of this is found in Matthew 16:18–19, Matthew 18:18, Luke 10:10, and John 20:21–23. These passages all teach that through faith, prayer and the preaching and living of the truth, God works *through, with, and by* His church to complete the plan of redemption on earth. *Through submissive, faithful, prayer the church receives the victory of Christ and uses that victory against the forces of evil.* The forces of evil delight in using physical, compulsive, destructive force, whereas Christ and His church employ only the principle of self-sacrificing love, and that principle, though harmless, is unconquerable! The church implements the authority and plan of God on earth not by force or politics or legislation or sociology, but *by preaching, teaching and living the truth and love of God, by the spoken word, printed page and the example of godly lives,* and leaving people free to accept or reject the gospel.

While we rightly reject the Roman idea that the Pope is God’s vicegerent on earth, *have we not failed to act upon the sweeping authority God has delegated to His corporate body in the world?* And that authority to implement the will and decision of God concerning earthly affairs operates solely within the framework and system of prayer, which God has ordained. By

God's own decree, all of this vast delegated authority is wholly inoperative apart from the prayers of man. Ezekiel 20:30, 31. What is the explanation of this plan? Why did God do it?^a

Prayer Privilege-The Badge of Rank

God had something infinitely great in mind when He planned the system of prayer. God's eternal purpose in the creation of the universe and the human race was to obtain an eternal companion for His Son. This fact is a part of the mystery revealed in the Book of Ephesians, reaching its illuminative climax in chapter five. This chapter expounds the Divinely revealed parallel between God's human and Divine marriage programs. Verse 32 clarifies the mystery when Paul unequivocally declares that the partners in the marriage program are Christ and His church. In God's eternal purpose, the church, as Christ's eternal companion, is to occupy the highest position in the universe short of the Godhead itself. As the bride of the eternal Son, she is to share with Him His sovereignty.

"Don't you know that some day we Christians are going to judge and govern the world? ... Don't you realize that we Christians will judge and reward the very angels in heaven?" 1 Cor. 6:2a, 3a LB

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. 2:12

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power authority over the nations." Revelation 2:26

"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" Revelation 3:21

"And they sang a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God a kingdom of priests, and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9-10 New Scofield)

Redeemed members of the human race will constitute this eternal companion. Since this companion is to share the throne with her Lover and Lord she must be trained, educated, and prepared for her queenly role.^a

Prayer Is "On-the-job" Training for Sovereignty

By delegating His authority to her for administering His decisions and enforcing His will upon earth, God placed the church in apprenticeship

for eternal sovereignty with Christ. By practicing in her prayer closet the enforcement of Heaven's decisions in earthly affairs, the church is in "on-the-job" training for co-sovereignty with Christ. She must learn the art of spiritual warfare, of overcoming evil forces in preparation for her assumption of the throne following the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. *To enable her to learn the technique of overcoming, God devised the scheme of prayer. To give her "on-the-job" training, God delegated to her the authority to enforce His will right here on earth. In order to enable her to acquire the character and the "know how" she will need as co-sovereignty, He has placed upon her the responsibility and authority to implement God's will and administer His decisions in the affairs of earth.*

Notice how often *earth*, as her sphere of action, is emphasized: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth," "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth," "If any two of you shall agree on earth." Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18, 19. This delegation of authority and administrative responsibility for earthly affairs constitute the highest honor and elevates her to the highest rank of all created beings. No angel nor archangel will ever achieve this rank because redeemed humanity alone is qualified to constitute the bride and share the Bridegroom's throne.^a

If the Church Will Not Pray, God Will Not Act

This is why God never goes "over the head" of His church to enforce His decisions. He will not take things out of her hands. To do so would sabotage His training program. Only by bearing this overwhelming weight of responsibility can she be brought to her full stature as co-sovereign with Jesus. This is why when she fails He will wait. This is why He will do nothing in the realm of human redemption until she accepts her responsibility and uses her privilege and prerogative of intercession. If she will not pray, God will not act because this would abort His purpose to bring His church to her full potential as His co-sovereign.

This was God's plan from the beginning. He will not spoil it now by taking things out of her hands. *He will let the whole world go to destruction first.* His part of the work of redemption is full and complete, but He will not override His church. *His eternal purpose is the qualifying of His eternal companion for entering into full partnership with her Lord in the governing process of the universe.* She can be qualified only through the apprenticeship of prayer and intercession. Only thus does she learn to enter into and

participate in the eternal purpose of her Lord. Therefore, *God will do nothing apart from His church.*^a

Prayer-The Main Business of the Church

This is why John Wesley said, “God will do nothing but in answer to prayer.” This is why S. D. Gordon said that, “The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is to pray.” This is why he also said, “You can do more than pray *after* you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray *until* you have prayed.” This also explains his statement, “Prayer is striking the winning blow... service is gathering up the results.” It likewise explains the statement of E. M. Bounds about prayer. “God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil... The prayers of God’s saints are the capital stock of heaven by which God carries on His great work upon earth. God conditions the very life and prosperity of His cause on prayer.” If these things are true, then “prayer should be the main business of our day.”^a

The Church Holds The Key

Checks used by some business firms require the signatures of two individuals to make them valid. One signature is not enough. Both parties must sign. This illustrates God’s method of operating through the prayers and faith of His people. His promises are His checks signed in His own blood. His part was fully completed at Calvary. But no promise is made good until a redeemed man enters the throne room of the universe and, by prayer and faith, writes his name beside God’s. Then, and not until then, are the check’s resources released. It is like a safety deposit box in the bank vault. The keeper has a key and you have a key. Neither key alone will open the box. But, when you give the keeper your key, she inserts *both* keys and the door flies open, making available all the treasures stored in the box. *Heaven holds the key by which decisions governing earthly affairs are made, but we hold the key by which those decisions are implemented.* This being so, then prayer takes on a very different dimension from the conventional notion or understanding. *Prayer is not overcoming reluctance in God.* It is not persuading Him to do something He is unwilling to do. It is “binding upon earth” that which already has been bound in heaven. Matt. 16:19 Amplified. *It is implementing His decision. It is enforcing His will upon earth.* Prayer makes possible God’s accomplishing what He wants and what He cannot do without it. The content of all true prayer originates in the heart

of God. So it is He who inspires the prayer in the heart of man, and the answer to every God-inspired petition is already prepared before the prayer is uttered. When we are convinced of this, then faith for the answer is easy—far easier than it would be otherwise.^a

Too Busy to Pray

No angel was ever invited to share this high privilege. No archangel was ever invited into the throne room of the universe, only redeemed humanity. And many of us are too busy watching television and following sports. We are so busy with the cares and pleasures of this life, trying to keep up with the trend, that we do not have time to pray.

Perhaps some may be thinking, are we to have nothing at all for ourselves? The answer is, NO. Christ is to be ALL and in all. You are not your own. You are bought with a price. 1 Cor. 6:19–20. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor. 10:31. If you can buy the new car, the new home, the new furniture, the new gadgets, hold down two jobs, etc. for the glory of God—well and good. But if we didn’t have to have such a high standard of living would we not have time to pray? If we were not so enamored of sports and entertainment, would we have more time to pray? We have more leisure than ever before—but less time to pray. We are not only cheating God and the world but we are cheating ourselves. By our failure to pray we are frustrating God’s high purpose in the ages. We are robbing the world of God’s best plan for it and we are limiting our rank in eternity. “And I sought for a man among them and found none.”^a

^a Certain passages in this chapter are derived directly or indirectly from *Destined For The Throne* by Paul Billheimer, used by permission of the publishers: Christian Literature Crusade.

13

The Church and the Privilege of Prayer

From *Steps To Christ*, Chapter 11, pp. 93–104

“Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.

“When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us.

“Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, ‘in all points tempted like as we are;’ but as the sinless one His nature recoiled from evil; He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.

“Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.

“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation.

“There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our

need of help from Him. He has promised, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' Isaiah 44:3. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit's influence, or God's blessing cannot be received.

"Our great need is itself an argument and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do these things for us. He says, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' And '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?' Matthew 7:7; Romans 8:32.

"If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance.

"Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. 'He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' Hebrews 11:6. Jesus said to His disciples, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' Mark 11:24. Do we take Him at His word?

"The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good — that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'

"If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness.

"When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? Matthew 6:12. If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven.

"Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be 'instant in prayer,' to 'continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.' Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2. Peter exhorts believers to be 'sober, and watch unto prayer.' 1 Peter 4:7. Paul directs, 'In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.' Philippians 4:6. 'But ye, beloved,' says Jude, 'praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.' Jude 20, 21. Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God.

"There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.

"We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not

sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength.

“Pray in your closet, and as you go about your daily labor let your heart be often uplifted to God. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. These silent prayers rise like precious incense before the throne of grace. Satan cannot overcome him whose heart is thus stayed upon God.

“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul.

“Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven.

“We need to have more distinct views of Jesus and a fuller comprehension of the value of eternal realities. The beauty of holiness is to fill the hearts of God’s children; and that this may be accomplished, we should seek for divine disclosures of heavenly things.

“Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every

unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun.

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ‘The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.’ James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. ‘He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.’ Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.

“Jesus said, ‘Ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you.’ ‘I have chosen you: . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.’ John 16:26, 27; 15:16. But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.

“God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks and retire from the world in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ’s life — between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work.

“We sustain a loss when we neglect the privilege of associating together to strengthen and encourage one another in the service of God. The truths of His word lose their vividness and importance in our minds. Our hearts cease to be enlightened and aroused by their sanctifying influence, and we decline in spirituality. In our association as Christians we lose much by lack of sympathy with one another. He who shuts himself up to himself is not filling the position that God designed he should. The proper cultivation of the social elements in our nature brings us into sympathy with others and is a means of development and strength to us in the service of God.

“If Christians would associate together, speaking to each other of the love of God and of the precious truths of redemption, their own hearts would be refreshed and they would refresh one another. We may be daily learning more of our heavenly Father, gaining a fresh experience of His grace; then we shall desire to speak of His love; and as we do this, our own hearts will be warmed and encouraged. If we thought and talked more of Jesus, and less of self, we should have far more of His presence.

“If we would but think of God as often as we have evidence of His care for us we should keep Him ever in our thoughts and should delight to talk of Him and to praise Him. We talk of temporal things because we have an interest in them. We talk of our friends because we love them; our joys and our sorrows are bound up with them. Yet we have infinitely greater reason to love God than to love our earthly friends; it should be the most natural thing in the world to make Him first in all our thoughts, to talk of His goodness and tell of His power. The rich gifts He has bestowed upon us were not intended to absorb our thoughts and love so much that we should have nothing to give to God; they are constantly to remind us of Him and to bind us in bonds of love and gratitude to our heavenly Benefactor. We dwell too near the lowlands of earth. Let us raise our eyes to the open door of the sanctuary above, where the light of the glory of God shines in the face of Christ, who ‘is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.’ Hebrews 7:25.

“We need to praise God more ‘for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.’ Psalm 107:8. Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the

constant recipients of God's mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us.

"Anciently the Lord bade Israel, when they met together for His service, 'Ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.' Deuteronomy 12:7. That which is done for the glory of God should be done with cheerfulness, with songs of praise and thanksgiving, not with sadness and gloom.

"Our God is a tender, merciful Father. His service should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. God would not have His children, for whom so great salvation has been provided, act as if He were a hard, exacting taskmaster. He is their best friend; and when they worship Him, He expects to be with them, to bless and comfort them, filling their hearts with joy and love. The Lord desires His children to take comfort in His service and to find more pleasure than hardship in His work. He desires that those who come to worship Him shall carry away with them precious thoughts of His care and love, that they may be cheered in all the employments of daily life, that they may have grace to deal honestly and faithfully in all things.

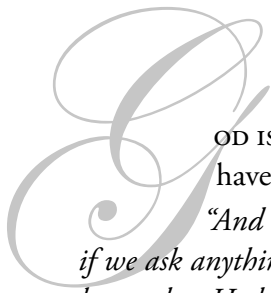
"We must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should keep in our thoughts every blessing we receive from God, and when we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.

"The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth' God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with 'thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.' Isaiah 51:3."

— *Steps To Christ*, Chapter 11, pp. 93–104

14

The Church and Unanswered Prayer



OD IS MORE WILLING TO answer our prayers than we are to have them answered.

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” 1 John 5:14, 15

We have learned that Satan is a conquered foe. Christ has won an infinite victory over the forces of evil and that victory is for His church, and His church is raised with Him to sit in heavenly places. Moreover, the Scriptures are replete with unequivocal promises of God to answer prayer. Yet it is clear that the church is not living up to her full spiritual potential as set forth in the Word. The lukewarm condition has delayed the finishing of God’s work in the earth for more than a century. If Laodiceans are praying for victory, if church members are praying, what is the reason? Where does the fault lie?

Let us analyze concisely from Scripture six basic reasons for unanswered prayer. It must be settled once and for all that any reason for unanswered

prayer is always on the human side. On God's side of the matter the Word is clear that He will answer prayers which are in harmony with His will.

Six Reasons For Unanswered Prayer

Egocentric or selfish prayers — James 4:3.

The J. B. Phillips translation reads: "And when you do ask he doesn't give it to *you*, for you ask in quite the wrong spirit—you only want to satisfy your own desires."

Selfishness is antagonistic to the "circuit of beneficence" and therefore selfishness renders the particular prayer unanswerable. We need to ask first to be cleansed of selfish motivation and to be motivated by the selfless love of God so that we may want to glorify God.

Spiritual Pride

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about a case of unanswered prayer in his own life. See 2 Corinthians 12:7–10. The J. B. Phillips translation of 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 is as follows:

"So tremendous, however, were the revelations that God gave me that, in order to prevent my becoming absurdly conceited, I was given a physical handicap—one of Satan's angels—to harass me and effectually stop any conceit. Three times I begged the Lord for it to leave me, but his reply has been, My grace is enough for you: for where there is weakness, my power is shown the more completely." Therefore, I have cheerfully made up my mind to be proud of my weaknesses, because they mean a deeper experience of the power of Christ. I can even enjoy weaknesses, suffering, privations, persecutions and difficulties for Christ's sake. For my very weakness makes me strong in him."

We learned from Chapter 3 that sin originated in self seeking. Lucifer sought to be first in heaven, thereby disrupting the "circuit of beneficence" and declaring war upon the principle of self-sacrificing love. Ego exaltation is self-destructive. Ezekiel 28:18 in The Living Bible reads:

"You defiled your holiness with lust for gain; therefore I brought forth fire from your own actions and let it burn you to ashes."

He used the gifts God had showered upon him to bolster his covetousness, greed, and ambition for power until the inner fires of passion burned his personality to "ashes" and will yet burn his entire being into nothing.

In 2 Corinthians 12:7 we see that the Lord may not answer a particular request because of the danger of spiritual pride developing as a result of granting the request. Paul also cautioned Timothy that an elder must not be a novice or a convert “in case he becomes conceited and incurs the doom passed on the devil.” 1 Timothy 3:6 Moffatt.

Paul was given many special revelations and there was the danger of him becoming conceited. To counteract the danger of being “exalted above measure” and hence falling into the “condemnation of the devil,” Paul was “given” a “thorn,” and his request for its removal was refused as a safety measure. How easy it is to become conceited because of any particular God-given talent. Those who are used most by God need to be on special guard against the cancer of spiritual pride and conceit.

Laodicean pride of achievement is one reason why prayers for “organizational” advancement cannot be answered. If God could trust the petitioner to keep lowly, who knows how many more answers to prayer He would readily give. For this purpose He invites us to repent of our spiritual pride and recognize our nothingness. Revelation 3:14–22.^a

Prayerlessness

The victory of Christ over the forces of evil, (over the flesh, the world, and Satan) is *received by the church through the prayer of faith and submission*. God ordained prayer not primarily as a means of getting things done for Himself, but as part of the training program for His church. Through prayer we receive the already accomplished victory, through *service we deploy that victory* against Satan. *Unless the church understands this and enters into sincere cooperation with God’s plan of prayer, the power needed to overcome Satan and finish the work will not be released. There is no authority, no power apart from persistent believing prayer.* To the extent that the church fails to realize this and give herself to prayer and intercession, to that extent she ties God’s hands and forfeits her right to answered prayer.

This brings us to the greatest reason for the paucity of answers to prayer—*prayerlessness itself*. “Ye have not because ye ask not.” James 4:2. Since true prayer is an acknowledgement of need, of helplessness, a self-satisfied church would not pray much. *Laodicean self-sufficiency is the main reason for prayerlessness*. Many churches today have efficient, well-structured and highly “successful” programs and organizational machinery in stewardship and finance and evangelism etc., *but if they*

are substitutes for an effective prayer program, they may be useless so far as damaging Satan's kingdom is concerned.

A prayerless church is an ecclesiastical treadmill. It may employ enormous manpower, absorb much time, and demand a huge financial budget. It may flatter the ego and appear very successful, but it is doing little or no damage to Satan's kingdom.

From heaven's standpoint, all spiritual victories are won, not primarily in the pulpit, not in the limelight of publicity, not in argument and discussion, not in massive organizational machinery and human planning *but in the secret place of prayer!*

It is not primarily personality or eloquence or art or psychological skill which wins souls, even though each may have its place, *but it is prayer!* The church or church member who takes Revelation 3:14–22 seriously will become a praying church, or praying member. *Prayer is where the action is. The only power that overcomes Satan and releases souls from his stranglehold is the power of the Holy Spirit, and the only power that releases the energy of the Holy Spirit is the power of believing prayer! John 6:63; James 5:13–18.* An interesting Old Testament story illustrates that intercessory prayer wins the victory. It is the story of Israel and Amalek.^a

Israel and Amalek. God had brought Israel out of Egypt and was leading her toward the promised land for the purpose of developing her into the Messianic nation. Satan, the great enemy of God and His Messianic program, sought at this point to hinder the further progress of Israel toward the land. He stirred up the heathen nation of Amalek, a descendant of Ishmael, and sought to use the Amalekites as his instruments of opposition. As the battle was being joined, Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.” So Joshua did as Moses had said and fought with Amalek. “And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed” Exodus 17:9–11. You know the rest of the story. When Moses grew weary and had to rest his arms, Aaron and Hur stood on either side and supported him until Amalek was completely defeated, and God's plan for the Messianic nation proceeded.^a

A Mountain-top Victory. To the superficial observer the action was on the battlefield where the troops were in combat. But the spiritually

discerning mind knows that the real battle was fought, and the victory won up on the mount where Moses, Aaron and Hur were unitedly holding aloft the rod of God, symbol of His power. The Amalekites were merely the tools of Satan. They were controlled and inspired by satanic forces. When the three intercessors on the mount unitedly engaged in believing prayer, the demonic forces motivating the Amalekites were bound and they were paralyzed. Then Israel prevailed. But when weariness compelled Moses to rest, the evil spirits were released and again energized Israel's foes. Therefore, Aaron and Hur united with Moses and strengthened him, assisting to hold up his hands in intercession until the going down of the sun. Thus, it is said, Joshua beat Amalek. But the *real* action was on the top of the hill. There the evil spirits were bound so that Joshua and Israel could prevail. "The winning blow" was struck on the heights of intercession. Joshua and Israel merely "gathered up the results." Therefore, prayer *is* where the action is.

Since this is true, then prayer becomes the highest privilege of the redeemed because it places the intercessor as truly at the front line of spiritual conflict and conquest as the pastor, evangelist, missionary, or any other soldier of the cross.^a

Lack of perseverance or Importunity

One reason many prayers are apparently unanswered is the failure of the petitioner to continue with importunity until the answer is received. Importunity in prayer combined with perfect faith is unconquerable.

Jesus laid down the principle of perseverance, of persisting, of importunity in Luke 11:5–13. Please study it carefully. The question is this: If God is not unwilling to answer our prayers why must we persist—persevere—in praying? The answer has to do with the issues involved in the great controversy between light and darkness. According to 1 John 5:14–15, every prayer offered in faith according to God's will is always answered in heaven. But Satan never allows an answer to reach earth if he can prevent it. *Persistence and importunity in prayer are not needed to persuade a willing God but to enable Him to overcome opposition of hindering evil spirits.* If God's purpose in His prayer program is to give us "on-the-job" training in overcoming Satan, He cannot arbitrarily remove the demonic hindrances. If He went over the church's head, took the matter out of her hands, and won the victory for her, it would prevent her growth unto full

stature and qualifying for the throne as an overcomer. *This is the reason for the Biblical teaching on the importance of importunity.* The answer to many prayers that have already been granted in heaven may never be received because the petitioner becomes weary, discouraged, or intimidated, and gives up the fight. Jesus tells us that the man who needed three loaves from his neighbor received them because of his importunity. And then He adds, “Ask, and keep on asking, and it shall be given you; seek, and keep on seeking, and you shall find; knock, and keep on knocking, and the door shall be opened to you” Luke 11:9 Amplified. The word from God to Habakkuk the prophet is pertinent here! “The vision has its own appointed hour, it ripens, it will flower; if it be long then wait, for it is sure, and it will not be late.” Hab. 2:3 Moffat.

The importance of perseverance and importunity is highlighted in the prayer of Daniel in Daniel 10, and here too the invisible forces involved are explained.

The vision concerning the future of the nation came to Daniel at the close of a three week period of fasting. During all of that time Daniel was in mourning for his people, that is, he was engaged in prayer and intercession concerning the future of Israel. When at last the angel appeared with the message from heaven, he revealed to Daniel the astounding reason for the long delay. Daniel's prayer was heard in heaven the very day that he began his intercession and immediately this heavenly messenger was dispatched with the answer. But he was intercepted. The Living Bible paraphrases it this way:

“That very day I was sent here to meet you. But for twenty-one days the mighty Evil Spirit who overrules the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the top officers of the heavenly army, came to help me, so that I was able to break through these spirit rulers of Persia” Dan. 10:12–13.^a

Battle in the Spirit World. Here is an historical account of a literal conflict in the unseen realms. It is doubtless the pattern of many similar conflicts that rage constantly in the spirit world. It is the story of an action on two levels. Down by the river is a man in fasting and prayer. He labors, he pleads, he insists, he persists, he importunes, wrestles, and agonizes. He is in mourning day after day. He has read Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years of captivity and knows that the time has almost expired. The time

for the fulfillment is almost here. Although God is sovereign and could, if He chose, fulfill His prophecies unaided, Daniel evidently realized that intercession had a part to play in bringing the prophecy to pass. God had made the prophecy. *When it was time for its fulfillment He did not fulfill it arbitrarily outside of His program of prayer. He sought for a man upon whose heart He could lay a burden of intercession.* Intercession is the most unselfish thing anyone can do.

As always, God made the decision in heaven. A man was called upon to enforce that decision on earth through intercession and faith. This part of the conflict—the prayer sessions by the river—is on a level which we can observe. But another part of the battle was invisible from earth. While Daniel was on his face interceding, a concomitant conflict, a related pitched battle, was raging in the heavens. Two angels, and possibly the spirit forces under their command, were engaged in a fierce combat which continued for three weeks. Since God does nothing but in answer to prayer, if Daniel had grown weary and become discouraged, God would have been compelled to find someone else to intercede or permit His messenger to suffer defeat. Although the answer to his prayer was granted and already on the way, if Daniel had given up it presumably would never have arrived. Therefore the real battle was fought and the victory won in the place of prayer down on the river bank. The decisive action was there.^a

Lack of Faith in the Word of God

Perhaps the most basic reason for prayerlessness and lack of importunity is *unbelief*, lack of genuine faith in God's word. The unbelief may be unconscious, the unbelief may simply be the result of not knowing the promises of God, but it is betrayed by the feeble prayer life of the professed Christian or church.

The written word carries the same authority as Jesus' spoken word, the same authority as Christ Himself. The Spirit of God actually lives in His Word and the two cannot be separated. The Spirit works through the Word to establish believers in truth and to unite them in doctrine, and motivate them with love. John 17:17; John 16:13; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; John 10:35. It is of the highest importance to study and learn the promises of God and to study and learn the principles of truth in the Scriptures. Prayer and Bible study go hand in hand. If we do not believe the promises of God, then our prayers will be unanswered. *Let us learn them, believe*

them, claim them, and bring them to God in prayer. Since God does nothing but in answer to prayer, every promise in the plan of redemption will be fulfilled only in answer to the prayers of His people who believe His word.

Rejection of Truth

Two very important promises in the word of God are found in John 8:31, 32 and 1 John 1:6, 7. Both are based upon the believer's acceptance of truth. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Freedom from sin, fear and error is one of the most beautiful gifts of the gospel, but the condition laid down is that the believer must continue in the word of Jesus and know the truth.

To reject light (truth) is to walk in darkness (at least in the particular area of rejected truth), and scripture declares that this puts one out of fellowship, out of harmony, with God. The promise of progressive cleansing carries with it the condition that we must walk in the light as Jesus is in the light. 1 John 1:7.

The *organizations* of Sardis have rejected the present truth of the Three Angels Messages. (see Tract Series A, number 6, *The Prophecies of Revelation and God's Last Warning*) Therefore, when these *organizations* pray for revival there can be no answer to their prayers at the *organizational* level. Individuals in Sardis can receive answers to such prayers by accepting the light which their organization has rejected! And God will hear and answer the prayers of His true people in Babylon by sending the light which will separate them from Babylon!

Similarly, the light needed to cure the Laodicean condition is the fullness of the truth of the *testimony of Jesus*, His victory for us in *sinful* flesh, and His revelation of God's character in that flesh. To reject that light while still praying for revival is to remain in the Laodicean condition. God answers the Laodicean prayer by sending the light which reveals our true condition and the remedy for that condition. Rejection of that light is rejection of the answer to the prayer. And remember, acceptance of light is an *individual* responsibility.

^a Certain passages in this chapter are derived directly or indirectly from *Destined For The Throne* by Paul Billheimer, used by permission of the publishers: Christian Literature Crusade.

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The Church and the Mystery of Praise

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Hebrews 11:6

“Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23

THE PROBLEM OF A *living faith*, of faith without doubt, is a very real problem. Many who pray much are plagued with doubt and are never quite sure that their prayers have prevailed because their faith is tentative and mixed with doubt. How can one's faith be cultivated to be a strong vibrant faith, even the faith of Jesus? The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired.

One Reformer said that faith is the *expecting* the Word of God to do what it says, and the *depending* upon that Word to do what it says because it is the Word of God. Faith is *accepting* the promises and declarations of God's Word *without question or reservation*. Faith is placing *all hope* upon the promises of God and being *absolutely sure* that what God has promised He is *eternally able to accomplish*. Romans 4:20, 21. Faith is heartfelt appreciation of and gratitude for what God has done and is doing for us through Jesus Christ. Faith is full surrender to God in full assurance

that we are secure in His love and that He is working out all things for the eternal good of those who trust and submit to Him. Faith is knowing that whatever we get from God comes as a free gift. We can never deserve nor earn the gifts of God. He gives to us because His nature is love and He loves us unconditionally and wants us to surrender to Him so that His love shall heal us with the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Faith is *trusting God and standing firm upon His Word* even though from all appearances everything seems to be saying the *opposite* of His Word. *Faith is the gift of God to us*, and is cultivated through prayer and study of His Word and through practice. And the best way to practice and therefore to cultivate faith is *by praising God!*

There is much more emphasis in the Bible on praise than on prayer. In the Bible, the entire universe is envisioned as one grand chorus of praise to the Creator. Read Psalm 148–150. In Psalm 145:10 we read: “All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and the saints shall bless thee.” And in Psalm 147:1 “Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.” *Praise is the highest occupation of angels. Heaven is one grand choir of praise.* Cherubim and seraphim increasingly adore Him. Read Revelation 4:8–11, Revelation 5:11–13, and Revelation 19:6. Creatures of such high office as throne-angels have as their unceasing occupation the singing of praises to God: “they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,” Revelation 4:8.

Many have underestimated the importance of praise. Many simply regard it as aesthetic exercise for choirs, with little practical value. But if praise is the highest occupation of angels there must be some valid reason for it. If heaven considers it important to maintain a chorus of praise unceasingly day and night around the throne, it must be *supremely important and productive!*

The First Angel’s message of Revelation 14:6–7 invites us to “*Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*”

Whether he knows it or not, mankind must give glory to someone, and basically, we either give glory to God or to self. And giving glory to self is giving glory to Satan, the inventor of self-seeking. We live in a world today in which man delights in giving glory to man, in praising man. Hundreds of thousands of sports fans crowd into sports arenas to praise their heroes in cricket, football, baseball, athletics etc. The world is sports

crazy and this is really a form of self-worship—exaltation of any man is exaltation of mankind, ourselves, and this is what the natural heart loves. It is modern idolatry.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy that in the last days self-love would reach its peak in development. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves.” And then follows the list of character defects which spring from self-centeredness: “covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy”, etc. 2 Timothy 3:1–5.

And so Revelation 14:6, 7, the First Angel’s message, advises mankind to fear God and give *Him* the glory, not *self*, but *Him*. To fear God and give Him the glory means to *adore* God, to *admire* Him, to be *absolutely carried away* by His loving sweetness, to be “hooked” on Him, to give one’s mind up to His control, to be absorbed in contemplating how righteous He is! The wonderful end-time message of the character of God so clears away the lies which Satan has been telling on God’s character that we have no excuse now for thinking that God is a vindictive tyrant. The message of Jesus interprets the Old Testament with such accuracy that we can know for sure that God is not a killer but rather the most selflessly compassionate and loving Person in the universe. Hell will be the product of satanic selfishness, not the product of God. And those who perish at last will do so because they will have rejected God’s love.

Self-worship, the attempt to earn salvation by works, and the giving of glory to mankind are the basic ingredients of Babylon. Since self-centeredness is self destructive, then Babylon must fall, and this is the message of the Second Angel of Revelation 14:8. Babylon is false Christianity and false religion. It masquerades as the true but it is really false, and has in its grasp the majority of the professed worshippers of God.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy that religion characterized by a *form of godliness without power* would be the hallmark of the last days. 2 Timothy 3:5. The ultimate behavioral manifestation of Babylon is disobedience to God’s will. If we look again at Revelation 14:6, 7 we see there that the reason given for the command to give glory to God is that *God is the eternal Creator* who made the universe. So important is this truth that God established a *memorial*: the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Worship and praise are to be rendered to God because He is the infinite Creator and we are His dependent creatures. Therefore, the

Sabbath commandment lies at the very foundation of true worship and intelligent praise to God. Revelation 14:7 tells us to “Fear God, and give glory to Him . . . and worship him *that made heaven, and earth, and sea, and the fountains of waters.*” And Exodus 20:8–11: “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do thy work: but *the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*” We see, therefore, that Sabbath keeping and giving glory to God go hand in hand. Both are based upon the eternal truth that God is Creator and He alone is worthy of the praise of His creatures!

The Third Angel’s message of Revelation 14:9–12 shows us that Babylon will fall to the point of enforcing Sunday worship by political legislation. Can you imagine that the very organizations which label Sabbath keeping as legalism will employ political legislation to enforce the keeping of a day that has no scriptural foundation as a holy day? That will indeed be the “mark of the beast,” the very hallmark of false religion—legalism at its worst.

It is clear then that praising God and giving Him the glory is an integral part of His final message to mankind, So important is praise that God gives us the seventh day of each week to devote entirely to worship, adoration and praise. And since praising God includes faith in His Word over and above any word of man, then to praise Him on His day will separate His true movement from those who exalt the day of the Papacy, Sunday.

Praising God is based upon concrete scriptural facts and the wonderful promises of God. Scripture tells us:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:2–4

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

“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.”

Romans 8:28

Read also the passages Romans 8:29–39, Philippians 4:4, 6, 7, 13, 19, and 1 Thessalonians 5:18. The natural thing for us to do is to be happy when things are going good and to be depressed and gloomy when things are going badly. But as we learned in Chapter 10, we must *praise God for adversity* and thank Him for His refining work. When this is done, God will deliver us if it is His will or give us the grace to endure, and, most importantly, our characters will undergo progressive cleansing. The next time disaster strikes or things go bad why not try *thanking* and *praising* God and surrendering everything to Him. You will be amazed at the results!

Praise and Character Development

If the highest function of angelic hosts is praise, it follows logically that the highest function of the human spirit must also be praise. Ever-increasing approximation to the infinitely lovely character of God is the most sublime goal of all creation. This is the *summum bonum*, the greatest good, the highest joy, the most exquisite delight, the supreme rapture, and the most ravishing transport of the human spirit. Just as antagonism, hostility, and cursing against God exercises and strengthens all that is most abominable, diabolical, and base in the human spirit, so worship and praise of the infinitely lovely God exercises, reinforces, and strengthens all that is most sublime, transcendent, and divine in the inner being. Thus as one worships and praises, he is continually transformed step by step, from glory to glory, into the image of the infinitely happy God. And the process can be expected to continue eternally. Therefore, praise is the most useful occupation and activity in enabling God to realize the supreme goal of the universe, that of “bringing many sons unto glory.”^a

Praise and Mental Health

In recent years the subject of mental health among believers has received much attention. In the world at large, it is alleged that over half of the available hospital beds are occupied by victims of mental and nervous disorders. To deal with this problem great mental-health institutions have been constructed and the profession of psychiatry has been developed. A massive program of personal and corporate praise could put a large number of psychiatrists out of business and empty many mental institutions. The

quintessence of all of our mental and nervous disorders is over-occupation with the personal ego, namely, self-centeredness. When the personality becomes centripetal, that is, ego-centered, it disintegrates. Out of extreme self-centeredness arises defensiveness, hostility, and aggressive antisocial behavior. According to the psychiatrists, these are the symptoms of mental sickness which require one to be hospitalized. To make one's self his center is self-destructive. Jesus affirmed this principle when He said. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" Luke 9:24 NS^a

Praise Decentralizes the Self

Here is one of the greatest values of praise. It decentralizes self. The worship and praise of God demands a shift of center from self to God. One cannot praise without relinquishing occupation with self. When praise becomes a way of life, the infinitely lovely God becomes the center of worship rather than the bankrupt self. Thus the personality becomes properly integrated, and destructive stresses and strains disappear. This is mental wholeness. Praise produces forgetfulness of self, and forgetfulness of self is health.^a

Praise Is Less Costly

One may pay a psychiatrist several dollars an hour to listen and look wise, and come away poorer and no better. But when a born-again believer suffering with depression and other emotional stresses turns to the infinitely lovely and all-wise God, and applies himself diligently to worship and praise, a healing process begins. Praise, therefore, is something more than a vacuous religious form. It is the most practical and rewarding of occupations.^a

Praise and Domestic Peace

This principle has a most happy application in the home where stresses and strains most often threaten disruption. There is nothing like praise to dispel self-pity, defensiveness, and hostility. Praise and such domestic vices are totally incompatible. One cannot praise and sulk. Praise and irritation cannot coexist. A massive program of individual praise will make a marriage counselor superfluous and could greatly reduce the load of divorce courts.^a

A Biblical Illustration

There are other reasons why praise is of such supreme importance and why so much larger a portion of the Word is given to praise than to prayer. For

some reason, Satan fears praise even more than prayer. This is gloriously illustrated in 2 Chronicles, chapter 20. A confederacy of Moab, Ammon, and the inhabitants of Mt. Seir declared war on Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. He immediately called the nation to repentance, fasting, and prayer. People from all across the nation gathered in Jerusalem for a great prayer meeting. As a result, through Jahaziel the prophet, God assured Jehoshaphat and the nation that they would achieve victory without a battle. The engagement is described in verses 20–22:

“And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, o Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”^a

An Army Commits Suicide

Why was praise so effective in this situation? *It is because this was a spiritual conflict, a conflict between unseen spirits.* Since Judah was the Messianic nation, Satan had inspired and motivated this confederacy of nations to destroy Judah in an effort to prevent the coming of the Messiah. But Jehoshaphat’s prayer–and–praise program was more devastating to the enemy than an armed assault. Supported by the nationwide program of fasting and prayer, the praise of the choir and the ambush of the Lord so discomfited and confused the evil spirits that were animating their enemies that they became disoriented, confounded, and deranged, falling into insane, hysterical, and uncontrollable panic. In this state they turned upon one another and completely annihilated themselves.

The entire hostile army “committed suicide.”^a

Why Is Praise So Effective Against Satan?

Scripture informs us that God dwells between the cherubim. Psalm 80:1; 99:1, Isaiah 37:16, and Revelation 4:8 all tell us that the throne-angels cease

not, day or night, to praise God, “saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.”

God dwells in an aura, an atmosphere, an enswathement of praise. Praise and His presence have a mutual affinity. Where there is joyful praise, there He is dynamically and benevolently active. In Psalm 22:3 we are told that God “inhabits the praises” of His people. This means that wherever there is adoration, reverence, and acceptable worship and praise, there He identifies and openly manifests His presence. *And His presence always expels Satan.* Satan cannot operate in the divine ambience. For years, many have known that praise is power without fully understanding why. May this not be the explanation? Is it not a convincing rationale for praise? In short, *Satan is allergic to praise, so where there is massive, triumphant praise, Satan is paralyzed, bound, and banished.*

The secret of overcoming faith, therefore, is praise. It was James who said, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7. Since praise produces the atmosphere in which the Divine Presence resides, it is the most effective shield against Satan and satanic attack. Because praise is anathema to Satan, it is the most powerful defense, the most devastating weapon in conflict with him. Thus praise assures victory in prayer because it overcomes Satan who is the great antagonist in prayer warfare.^a

The Importance of Continuous Massive Praise

The praise which overcomes is not merely occasional or spasmodic praise, praise that fluctuates with moods and circumstances. *It is a continuous praise, praise that is a vocation, a way of life.*

“I will bless [praise] the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth” Psalm 34:1

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still [always] praising thee.” Psalm 84:4.

It has been pointed out that in heaven praise is so important that it constitutes the total occupation of a certain order of beings. Revelations 4:8. God gave to King David such a revelation of the importance and power of praise upon earth, that following the heavenly pattern he set aside and dedicated an army of four thousand Levites whose sole occupation was to praise the Lord. 1 Chronicles 23:5. They did nothing else. One of the last official acts of King David before his death was the organization of a formal program of praise. Each morning and each evening a contingent of these four thousand

Levites engaged in this service. “And to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at evening.” 1 Chronicles 23:30 NS. To the shame and defeat of the church, the significance of the massive praise content of the Word has been largely overlooked.^a

Praise as a Way of Life

To be more effective then, praise must be massive, continuous, a fixed habit, a full-time occupation, a diligently pursued vocation, a total way of life. This principle is emphasized in Psalm 57:7: “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.” This suggests a premeditated and predetermined habit of praise. “My heart is *fixed*.” This kind of praise depends on something more than temporary euphoria. We are told that at the very moment of the writing of this psalm, David was a fugitive from the wrath of Saul. His praise was upon principle, not impulse. It was based upon something more than fluctuating circumstances or ephemeral emotional states. It was praise which had penetrated and permeated the warp and woof of his being. It was praise which had become a full-time occupation, reflecting the pattern of continuous, unceasing praise in the celestial sphere.^a

Praise for All Things

This order of praise is not always easy, for it does not come spontaneously. It is no problem to praise in prosperity. It is not difficult to praise when circumstances seem favorable. It is natural to praise for “good” things. It is normal to be thankful for and rejoice in success, prosperity, good health, and fame. But David was praising while his life was in jeopardy. The Apostle Paul says that one is to “give thanks *always for all things*.” Ephesians 5:20. This, therefore, must include things that are painful, humiliating, and that even seem disastrous.^a

The Basis for Unceasing Praise

The self-evident truth which inspires this unceasing praise is the character and integrity of God Himself. If Satan had been successful in his attempt to dethrone the Most High, almighty selfishness instead of Almighty love would be upon the throne of the universe. If Satan had triumphed, all life would have been at the mercy of almighty malevolence. The entire universe would be hell. But, praise God, Satan lost. Today there is “a heart at the heart of the universe.” “The hands that were pierced do move the wheels of human history and mould the circumstances of individual

lives.” (*Maclaren*). As David said in Psalm 31:15: “My times are in thy hand.” Because Almighty Love is supreme, all who are in its embrace are kept safely and “the wicked one toucheth him not.” 1 John 5:18. *Nothing that is intrinsically evil can possibly reach a child of God because Almighty Love works all things, both “evil” and “good” to the ultimate benefit of the beloved. This includes all that seems most evil, even the mistakes of the trusting child of God.*^a

Praise as a Sacrifice

How can one offer this kind of praise? Hebrews 13:15 gives us the key: “By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, that is, the fruit of our lips.” What is meant by “the sacrifice of praise?” A sacrifice calls for death. In the Old Testament ritual it was an animal that died. But in the “sacrifice of praise” it is the personal ego which must be slain. *One must sacrifice his own judgment, his own opinion, his own evaluation of what is right and good, and praise God always for all things including “good,” “bad,” and “indifferent.”* “The fruit of the lips” means that the sacrifice of praise is incomplete until it is expressed.

God alone can remake us, remold us from within. Our part is to follow Paul’s advice to the Romans; to submit ourselves fully to Him, believe that He has taken over, and then accept eagerly and joyfully with thanksgiving and praise all the circumstances God uses to bring about His transformation of our lives.

Almost everyone has been or is the victim of circumstances and situations which, to his judgment, seem unfortunate, tragic, even calamitous, conditions in which he can see no good, only evil. It is humanly impossible to see how any beneficial purpose can be served by them. It is then that one offers “the sacrifice of praise.” *The only time one can offer this “sacrifice of praise” is when things seem to be going wrong*, for it is only then that he is called upon to die to his own opinions, choices, and judgment.^a

God brings certain people into our lives just to show us how incapable we are of loving others in our own strength. He doesn’t do it to make us feel bad. He does it to give us an opportunity to experience His transforming love in our life and in the lives of the people He has called us to love.

Do you thank Him for the people in your life who are difficult to love? Do you have a cranky neighbor, a difficult boss? Praise God for them because He loves you and wants to make your joy full by making it possible

for you to love them. He loves them too, and wants to use you as a channel for His love to them.

Perhaps the most wonderful and most challenging opportunities to love come in our own homes, right where we live. Does your husband or wife have certain qualities that rub you the wrong way? Are your parents difficult to live with, your children rebellious?

Love one another, Jesus said. Accept one another; thank God for one another. It isn't easy to thank God for an alcoholic husband or for an indifferent, rebellious child. It isn't easy to love someone who says he doesn't want our love. It isn't easy to admit that beam in our eye, the self-righteousness, the self-pity, the role we've played as a "long-suffering" martyr.

Can we thank God for bringing the people into our lives to show us the beam in our eye? Can we thank God for them, just as they are, and especially for the things that make them hard to love? Can we confess our inability to love them *for* their irritating habits? Can we tell God we *want* to love them and then submit ourselves to Him to be remolded, remade, so that we can love them perfectly, according to His will and plan for us?

Then we can confidently expect God to work a miracle in us. It may happen instantaneously. We *feel* a wonderful spark of love, and of course we rejoice and praise the Lord for that. But watch out and don't become dependent on feelings. That first spark may die down and we may sit around waiting for a second touch without doing anything in the meantime.

To love, deliberately and intentionally as Christ loves us, always requires the setting of our will. Whether we feel any love to begin with or not doesn't change the fact that we *do* love. God will show us practical and specific ways to communicate that love to the person He has placed in our life, and soon we will experience and sense a deeper love than any we've ever felt before. Our love will be stable and consistent, because it flows from a source beyond our own limited resources. It is God's love filling us to overflowing, spilling over to others through us. This is what it means to be rooted in God's love, and in that fertile soil, our own ability to love will grow and grow.

That is how the Holy Spirit bears fruit in our lives.

The Faith Which Supports Unceasing Praise

In offering the "sacrifice of praise" one embraces the faith that God is both benevolent and supreme, the faith that can "be still and know that He is

God.” Psalm 46:10 This faith knows that there is nothing at loose ends in the universe. It knows that Satan can never slip up on the “blind side” of God for He is the all-seeing One. This faith is certain that, since God is supreme, He has the skill to outwit Satan, not in some, but in *all* crises and dilemmas which Satan’s evil genius contrives and attempts to promote.^a

In ourselves we have no power to overcome evil. The overcoming power is always God. The essence of God’s message to us is that we must learn to focus attention on Him, the source of overcoming power, and not direct our attention toward the evil confronting us. He will then direct our action moment by moment.

Paul told the Romans, “Do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome (master) evil with good.” Romans 12:21 Amplified Bible.

In the case of Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, it was His very act of nonresistance to evil that broke the power over evil in the world.

Jesus was showing us that there is a better way to deal with evil than to resist it in the sense that we think of resistance. Our idea of resistance is to react in kind, using force against force, and so we react to the evil circumstances opposing us rather than responding to God’s presence and guidance in the situation.

Anytime our action is prompted by the evil circumstances surrounding us rather than by our faith in God’s power and perfect control of the situation, we’re allowing evil to overcome us rather than overcoming evil with the power of God.

Jesus was not a pacifist. When He said, “Resist not evil,” He meant that we should instead actively recognize the power of God over evil and recognize that God sometimes chooses to use apparently evil circumstances to bring about His plan of good.

In such a case, to resist evil would mean that we were working to thwart God’s perfect plan. If the disciples had succeeded in preventing the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, they would have meddled in God’s plan although it would have seemed to them that they were scoring a victory over evil.

Jesus came to conquer, not to teach us how to lose without whimpering.

Both James and Peter tell us to stand firm in faith against Satan. If we look at the context of their message, it is clear that they are in complete agreement with Jesus and with Paul.

“So give yourself humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you.” James 4:7

*“Be careful—watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy—stand firm when he attacks. Trust the Lord.”
1 Peter 5:8–9*

Our only defense against the power of Satan is the power God. That power is released when we stand firm in our faith that God is in perfect and loving control of every detail of the circumstances surrounding us. We express that faith in praising and thanking Him for the situation.

We are told to be careful and watch for the enemy’s attacks, but our attention must be focused on God, not on Satan. We are to be aware of our enemy, but our protection doesn’t lie in watching the enemy, but rather in our knowledge of God’s power.

If we let fear and doubts and a preoccupation with the presence of evil take over our minds, we block the power of God from entering the situation. We must learn to see evil in the right perspective—subject to the mighty power of God—and then let that power work everything for good according to God’s perfect plan.

Our part is to stand firm in faith, obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who will guide our outward actions in the situation. Inwardly, our part is *always* to keep our eyes on God and to praise and thank Him for His goodness and mercy in all things.

Standing firm in faith means that we must set our will to decide to accept God’s Word that He is in charge, regardless of what our feelings or outward circumstances may be like.

Praise Removes the “Evil” From Any Situation

Since all the “evil” in any situation is always because of Satan’s active presence and agency, and since he is allergic to praise, therefore victorious, triumphant, massive praise casts him out, just as it did from heaven. When Satan is cast out, the evil vanishes. Even if the circumstances are not changed, the evil is removed, its fangs are drawn, its poison is extracted. The idea that “praise always changes circumstances” is a mistake. It may not always change circumstances, but it will change the person. Since the root of all our problems is the unsanctified ego, inside change may be more important than changed circumstances. Therefore, in offering the

“sacrifice of praise” one accepts the position that nothing but “good” can come to the child of God no matter how “evil” it may seem. Knowing that “all things,” including apparent “evil,” are certainly working for one’s good, is ample basis for a life of continual praise.^a

Praising for Cancer

The eternal essence of a thing or circumstance is not in the thing itself but in one’s reaction to it. The distressing situation will pass, but one’s reaction to it results in a permanent moral and spiritual deposit in the character. Satan intends that adversity shall drive one away from God, causing him to sit in judgment upon Him, to question His motives, His goodness, and justice. Satan slanders God by suggesting that God has mistreated one, and that if He was really all good and powerful He would never allow this sorrow or calamity to come to any of His children.

When one heeds and accepts Satan’s suggestions and begins to doubt and accuse God of unfaithfulness and perfidy, then he begins to rebel against God, and his character deteriorates. That is what Satan intends, and when he succeeds, he has won.

When, instead, one allows the misfortune, affliction, or sorrow to drive him to God, the effect is just the opposite. Accepting the seeming misfortune as from the hand of an all-wise, all-loving and all-powerful God, who always works all things together for the good of the beloved, and praising Him that nothing intrinsically evil can ever come to one of His children, *is a reaction which strengthens and reinforces all that is best and most godlike in character.* With this reaction, God’s purpose is achieved and Satan has lost. *The adversity has left the individual stronger in faith, courage, and knowledge of God.* This is why a woman who had been brought back to God by a malignancy could triumphantly say, “I have been richly blessed by cancer.”

A God who can take all “evil,” even the mistakes and sins of a penitent child of God, and by the alchemy of His divine grace so transform them that they boomerang against Satan, enhance the character of the saint, and redound to the glory of God, is worthy of unceasing praise. A God with such a character is adequate basis for obedience to the exhortation. “Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, even the Father” Ephesians 5:20 ASV.

All that He blesses is our good, And unblessed good is ill; And all is right which seems most wrong. If it be His sweet will.

This is the basis for the faith that nothing intrinsically evil can come to a trusting child of God. Psalm 91:10.^a

Praise, the Secret of Faith Without Doubt

Thanksgiving and praise is the way to victory in every situation. This is a broad statement, but it is both logical and Scriptural. Since Satan is the great hindrance to successful prayer, when he is bound and banished from a situation the answers come through without fail. After all, successful prayer is overcoming satanic opposition to the purposes of God. The missing element in prayer that does not prevail is *triumphant faith*. And the missing element in faith that does not triumph is *praise*—perpetual, purposeful, aggressive praise. Praise is the highest form of prayer because it combines petition with faith. *Praise is the spark plug of faith. It is the one thing needed to get faith airborne, enabling it to soar above the deadly miasma of doubt. Praise is the detergent which purifies faith and purges doubt from the heart.* The secret of answered prayer is faith without doubt. Mark 11:23. And the secret of faith without doubt is praise—continuous, massive, triumphant praise, praise as the way of life. This order of praise is the solution to the problem of living faith and successful prayer.^a

^a Certain passages in this chapter are derived directly or indirectly from *Destined For The Throne* by Paul Billheimer, used by permission of the publishers: Christian Literature Crusade.

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The Church and the Latter Rain of the Holy Spirit

*T*HE APOSTLE PAUL LOOKED FORWARD to the time when the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth to God will be complete. Ephesians 1:10. Many people use the word “atonement” in a very narrow sense. But the word “atonement” has a broader meaning than many perceive.

Christ made atonement when He died at Calvary as a sacrifice for our sins and thereby reconciled us to God. 2 Corinthians 5:18, Romans 5:18. This sacrificial phase of the atonement was perfect, full, and complete. Hebrews 9:26. Yet there remained a further *priestly* ministry of that same atonement in the heavenly sanctuary.

When Christ intercedes before God with the merits of His death in behalf of the penitent sinner, He brings about atonement by mediation because His intercession reconciles the individual believer to God. In 1844 Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary to carry out His final ministry—atonement by judgment (the antitype of the Day of Atonement). Leviticus 16.

This ministry will result in the disposal of the sin problem, and in reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth to God. Ephesians 1:10.

Christ's final aspect of atonement will continue until His priestly ministry is completed and the decree goes forth that we read in Revelation 22:11–12.

When Jesus, Our High Priest, ascended in 31 A. D., He soon after poured out His Holy Spirit upon His disciples. That official beginning of the early rain of the Holy Spirit launched the Christian church on her way to continue the warfare against evil. Christ had won the victory at Calvary but His church had to deploy that victory against Satan in a progressive manner down through history. Now in His closing ministry in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, He is pouring out the latter rain of His Holy Spirit to enable His church to victoriously close off her warfare against Satan. Soon will come the final glorious manifestation of the work of the latter rain.

Many people have a wrong concept of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They think primarily in terms of the spectacular, in terms of power. But the Holy Spirit fills us with the love of God, and in so doing He shines the light of truth into every corner of our souls, thus exposing the hidden bits of selfishness so that our souls may be so cleansed of self, and filled and controlled by Divine love, that only the righteousness of Christ shall be manifested at all times. (We have already examined the details of that cleansing process in earlier chapters of this book).

The more of the Holy Spirit we have the more *selfless, meek, humble, patient* we become, and *distrustful of ourselves*. The refining process causes us to abhor self and adore Christ until the entire personality is under the absolute control of God's love and is filled to its limit with Christ's victory. And this is latter rain experience! Read 1 John 1:7, Job, and James 1.

There are many who are working hard to earn the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In some churches people have worked out a formula which says that if the majority of the church is at work, the Holy Spirit will be poured out and so they strive to get at least 51% of the membership working. But the Holy Spirit (early and latter rain) is a gift to be received by faith and full surrender. By believing the truth and walking in the light shining from the Most Holy Place, and submitting to the refining process in full faith in Christ and His Power to save, we receive more and more of the Holy Spirit. This means that the love of God fills and controls more and more of the details of our personality. Defects are cleansed out and the righteousness of Christ put into the human spirit, progressively.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. *Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain.*” — 1T 187

A. T. Jones makes the comment,

“If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that He is going down to the depths and He will reach the bottom at last and when He finds the last thing that is unclean or impure and that is out of harmony with His will and brings that up and shows that to us and we say, ‘I would rather have the Lord than that,’ then the work is complete and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character...

“How in the world can that seal of God, which is the impress of His perfect character revealed in us, be put upon us when there are sins about us? He cannot put the seal, the impress of His perfect character, upon us until He sees it there. And so He has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts. But the Lord knows the heart. He tries the conscience. He will cleanse the heart, and bring up the last vestige of wickedness. Let Him go on, brethren; let Him keep on His searching work.” — 1893 GCB 404

The refining process makes us more and more repentant. The goodness of God leads us to repentance, and under the extremely intense light of the “*character of God*” message, God’s people will reach an unprecedented level of repentance and abhorrence of self. By prayer, praise, and faith they will agonize for the fullness of the baptism of the Holy Spirit until they receive it by faith in Christ.

Pray For The Latter Rain (from *Testimonies To Ministers*, pp. 506–512)

“Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ ‘He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.’ In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God’s grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.

“The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.

“There is to be ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.’ There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.

“Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually

going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.

“At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, ‘Watch unto prayer,’ ‘Watch, ... and pray always.’ A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.

“‘Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain.’ Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man’s co-operation is required. God’s work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel

of blessing. Christ has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst.' The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.

"But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favorable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.

"The continued communication of the Holy Spirit to the church is represented by the prophet Zechariah under another figure, which contains a wonderful lesson of encouragement for us. The prophet says: 'The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? ... 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.... And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? ... Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.'

“From the two olive trees, the golden oil was emptied through golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God’s presence, His Spirit is imparted to human instrumentalities that are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God’s people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God’s presence. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light bearer in the world.

“This is the work that the Lord would have every soul prepared to do at this time, when the four angels are holding the four winds, that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. There is no time now for self-pleasing. The lamps of the soul must be trimmed. They must be supplied with the oil of grace. Every precaution must be taken to prevent spiritual declension, lest the great day of the Lord overtake us as a thief in the night. Every witness for God is now to work intelligently in the lines which God has appointed. We should daily obtain a deep and living experience in the work of perfecting Christian character. We should daily receive the holy oil, that we may impart to others. All may be light bearers to the world if they will. We are to sink self out of sight in Jesus. We are to receive the word of the Lord in counsel and instruction, and gladly communicate it. There is now need of much prayer. Christ commands, ‘Pray without ceasing;’ that is, keep the mind uplifted to God, the source of all power and efficiency.

“We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end. If we have walked with God in fellowship of the Spirit, it is because we have sought Him daily by faith. From the two olive trees the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us. But those who do not cultivate the spirit and habit of prayer cannot expect to receive the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love.

“Everyone is to keep himself separate from the world, which is full of iniquity. We are not to walk with God for a time, and then part from His company and walk in the sparks of our own kindling. There must be a

firm continuance, a perseverance in acts of faith. We are to praise God; to show forth His glory in a righteous character. No one of us will gain the victory without persevering, untiring effort, proportionate to the value of the object which we seek, even eternal life.

“The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.

“What proportion of our efforts has been made in accordance with the light the Lord has been pleased to give? We cannot depend upon form or external machinery. What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of His Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit. TM 506–512

Prayer is where the action is! Let us pray more, let us praise God more, let us allow Him to refine and purify us, let us surrender in full faith and claim the promises of the Spirit, and agonize for the latter-rain-victorious completion of God’s work on earth through the remnant of the woman’s seed.

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