

# Life on the Highest Plane

## by Ruth Paxson

### **In Three Volumes**

Volume 1: [The Person and Work of Christ](#)

Volume 2: [The Relation Between Christ and the Christian](#)

Volume 3: [The Believer's Response to the Holy Spirit's Inworking](#)

### **Introduction**

Every Christian has inherited untold riches. As a child of the King and a joint heir with Christ he is a spiritual multimillionaire. But comparatively few Christians bear the marks of spiritual affluence. Their conversation, character and conduct give the impression rather of spiritual impoverishment. Throughout the Church of Christ there is a universal complaint of dearth and deadness.

Many Christians do not seem to be conscious of their lack or their need. They are indifferent and self-satisfied. But, on the other hand, there are many whose lives are characterized by a humiliating consciousness of defeat and failure, by a growing unrest, and by a perpetual striving for something never attained. Their hearts cry out insistently, "Lord, is there nothing better than this for me in the Christian life?"

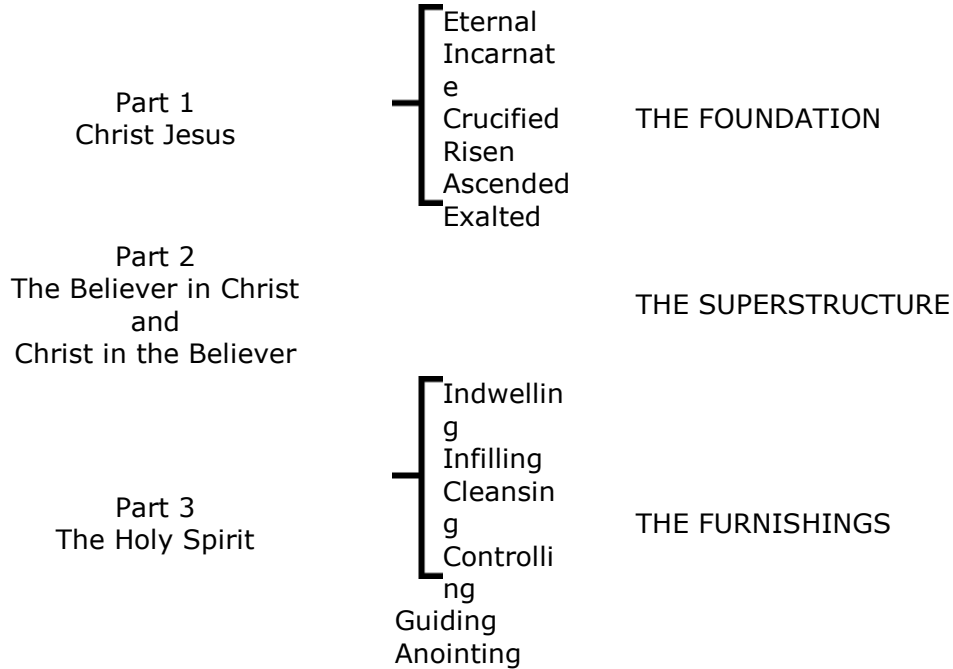
The purpose of these studies is to teach what are the Christian's possessions in Christ and how they may be appropriated, enjoyed and used.

These Bible studies were first given in embryo to pastors, evangelists, teachers and other Christian leaders in Conferences held in China. Later they grew into full size as they were taught in weekly Bible classes stretching over a period of six months.

In response to many requests from both Chinese and missionary friends that this message might be made available for their use, it has been prepared for publication.

God is building a spiritual house for His own glory and use. This house is composed of a foundation, a superstructure and furnishings.

These studies attempt to furnish the plan of such an habitation and to show step by step the process of its building. Each chapter is, as it were, a story complete in itself yet connected both with the story underneath it and the one above it. The work is divided into three volumes as here indicated:



It is the hope of the author that these Studies may be used by groups, as well as individuals.

The author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to Mrs. Mary McDonough for the use of Charts 2, 3, and 4 which are in her book *God's Plan of Redemption*; to the many authors whose books have been consulted for inspiration and confirmation and to the many friends who have had a large share in the sending forth of this message in print through their faithful and believing intercession.

This book is now given back to God with the prayer that He will use it to lift many to *Life on the Highest Plane*.

*Ruth Paxson*

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

## Chapter One Human Life on Three Planes

The Bible is a mirror in which man may see himself just as he is. Any person who wishes a true picture of himself will find it there. The Bible is God's studio in which will be found the picture of each of His created beings. Your photograph is there. It has been taken by the Divine Photographer, therefore it is flawlessly accurate. Do you wish to see *your* photograph?

The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul has divided the human race into three clearly distinguished groups and every member of the human family, irrespective of racial or natural inheritance, belongs to one of these groups. God's description of each is so accurate and so true that every person may know with certitude in which class he is.

This classification presents a study of human life on three planes, the lowest, the highest, and a middle plane: or the natural man, the spiritual man, and the carnal man. We will start with the study of life on the lowest plane, that of

### **THE NATURAL MAN**

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But *the natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Romans 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

1 Corinthians 12:3 R.V., "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

John 14:6, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Is the natural man a Christian? No one can be called a Christian who is not rightly related to God. Is the natural man then rightly related to God? To get our answer let us begin with John 14:6 and work backward to 1 Corinthians 2:4.

Jesus says that no one can get into right relationship with God the Father except through Himself. The Bible shows us with unmistakable clearness that this necessitates receiving Jesus Christ into the life as Saviour and as Lord. Paul tells us that no one can truly call Jesus Lord, except "in the Holy Spirit," and that if the Holy Spirit does not dwell in one he cannot belong to God as one of His own. It is the Holy Spirit alone who knows the things of God which He desires to give us freely in Christ. But 1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us that the natural man refuses to receive the things of the Spirit, they appear mere foolishness unto him. More than that, he cannot know them because it takes a spiritual mind to discern spiritual truth and he is without the Holy Spirit. So it is very clear that the natural man is not in the right relationship to God. Consequently from God's viewpoint, no matter how exemplary a life he may live on the plane of the natural, he is not a Christian.

#### **The Attitude of the Natural Man to God**

Let us study what Scripture says of the attitude of the natural man to God:

Galatians 4:8  
Romans 1:21

He does not know God.  
He has no gratitude to God.

Romans 3:11	He has no desire for God.
1 John 4:10	He has no love for God.
John 3:18	He has no faith in God.
Romans 3:15	He has no fear of God.
Romans 1:21,25	He does not worship God.
2 Timothy 3:8	He resists the truth.
1 Corinthians 2:14	He receives not the things of God.
2 Thessalonians 2:12	He rejects God's truth.
2 Thessalonians 1:8	He disobeys God's Gospel.
Romans 5:10	He is an enemy of God.

### **The Relationship of the Natural Man to God**

The attitude of the natural man to God determines his relationship to God. Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:21 make it quite clear that the natural man is an open and avowed enemy of God. This attitude on his part determines what God's relationship to him must be.

Ephesians 2:17	He is far from God.
Romans 3:19	He is guilty before God.
John 3:18	He is condemned by God.
John 3:37	He is under God's wrath.
Ephesians 4:18	He is alienated from the life of God.
Ephesians 2:12	He is without God in this life.
2 Thessalonians 1:9	He is without God in the life to come.

### **The Condition of the Natural Man**

The natural man is without the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, therefore he lives wholly and only unto himself. "The old man" is the centre of his life and has undivided control over his whole being. Self dominates his thoughts, affections, speech, will and actions. His nature is sinful, therefore his conduct is sinful.

The natural man is dead to God but alive to sin, self and Satan. He is under the dominion of "the prince of the power of the air," and is the bondservant of sin. He is a lost man, helpless and hopeless. The tragic part of it is that "the god of this age" has so blinded his mind that he does not comprehend the seriousness of his condition and consequently he has no power within himself to know God, to love God, to receive God, nor even to seek God. Surely this brief sketch of the natural man reveals life lived on the lowest plane. Let us next study life on the highest plane, that of

## **THE SPIRITUAL MAN**

1 Corinthians 12:15, "But *he that is spiritual* judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Galatians. 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, *ye which are spiritual*, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself,

lest thou also be tempted."

The spiritual man is the exact antithesis of the natural man.

### **The Relationship of the Spiritual Man to God**

The spiritual man is rightly related to God through faith in Jesus Christ. This relationship has been brought about by the Holy Spirit who has convicted him of the sin of unbelief in God's way of salvation and of the necessity of a righteousness not his own, if he would ever have fellowship with a holy, righteous God. He has revealed Jesus Christ to him as a Saviour from sin and as the Saviour *he* needs. The Holy Spirit has so wrought upon the mind, heart and will of the natural man that he has been convinced of the truth of the Gospel, convicted of the sin of his own heart, and has been led to put his faith in the Crucified One as his Saviour, and so has been "born of the Spirit" into the Kingdom of God.

The spiritual man has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, filling him, leading him, teaching him, empowering him. Through the new birth God's own life, eternal and uncreated, has been imparted to him and now Jesus Christ is his very life.

The spiritual man has a threefold relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ which is manifested in his character, in his conversation, and in his conduct.

The spiritual man has *accepted* Christ as his *Saviour*.

The spiritual man has *yielded* to Christ as his *Lord*.

The spiritual man has *appropriated* Christ as his *Life*.

Jesus Christ and he are one as the vine and the branch are one. Christ is the supreme need of his life and has the supreme place in his affections. Christ is all and in all to him.

### **The Condition of the Spiritual Man**

The spiritual man having taken the crucified, risen, glorified Christ as Saviour, Lord and Life, lives his life wholly unto God. The Lord Jesus is the centre of his life and has undivided control over his whole being.

Jesus Christ dominates his thoughts, affections, speech, will and actions. He has become a partaker of the nature of God so that there are two natures in the spiritual man but the divine nature is sovereign.

The spiritual man is habitually alive to God and dead to sin and self. He is a bondservant to God and gladly, joyously, acknowledges and submits to the sovereign Lordship of Jesus.

Jesus Christ is intensely real and precious to the spiritual man, and he considers, loves, serves, adores and worships Him. This condition is not due to anything in himself but is true because of his yielding himself unreservedly to the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, through whom he has been enabled to seek, to receive, to love and to know Christ Jesus as his Saviour and through whom he is filled with

His life. Surely this brief sketch of the spiritual man reveals life lived on the highest plane. Let us lastly study life on the middle plane, that of

### **THE CARNAL MAN**

Corinthians 3:1-4, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but *as unto carnal*, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For *ye are yet carnal*: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; *are ye not carnal?*"

The carnal man is an hyphenated man, belonging to two spheres.

#### **The Relationship of the Carnal Man to God**

The carnal man is a Christian because he has obtained sonship through faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Therefore he is rightly related to God. But he has entered into neither the possessions nor the privileges of a son and his practices are not those becoming his position in the family of God.

The carnal man has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him but He is constantly being grieved and quenched so that He has restricted power in and dominion over the life.

The carnal man has been renewed through the new birth but he is still a "babe in Christ." He sits at the table of the Lord to partake of His bounties but he has no appetite nor capacity for "strong meat." He subsists on "milk." He is not a full grown man. He actually has been united to the Lord Jesus but he is an "adulterer" loving the world and caring far more for its people and pleasures than for Jesus Christ (James 4:4).

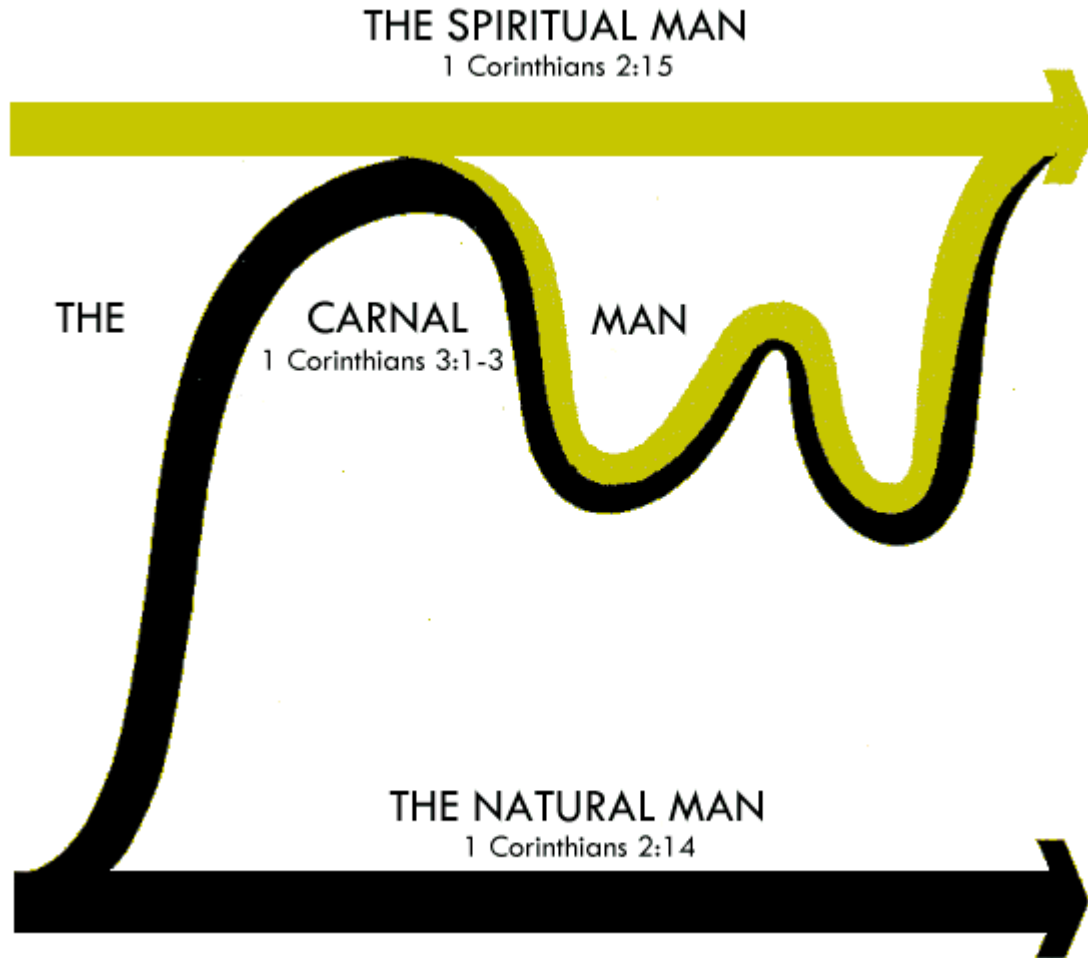
The carnal man has accepted Christ as his Saviour but he has little or no apprehension of a life of complete surrender to, and of full appropriation of, Jesus Christ as his Lord and his Life. He feels a need of Christ and desires some relationship with Him but he is not satisfied in Him. Christ has *a* place in his heart but not *the* place of supremacy and preeminence.

#### **The Condition of the Carnal Man**

The carnal man lives his life partly unto God and partly unto himself.

The Lord Jesus is really at the centre of his life but "the old man" is usually on the throne. There is a divided control over his life. Sometimes Christ dominates his thoughts, affections, speech, will and action but more often they are under the dominion of self. Two natures are side by side in the carnal man, the divine and the fleshly, and he is under the sway of each in turn according as he yields to one or to the other. He is alive to God spasmodically but he is equally alive to sin, self and Satan. He attempts to live in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly and he fails in both.

The carnal man is in a miserable condition and his life is always one of defeat and discouragement, often one of despair. This condition is due to ignorance of the deep things of God, unwillingness to yield himself unreservedly to the Lord Jesus Christ, and unbelief in appropriating Christ with all His graces and gifts. Surely this brief sketch of the carnal man reveals life lived on a middle plane. (See Diagram 1.)



**Diagram 1: Life on Three Planes**

We have looked into God's mirror. Have you seen yourself? We have been in God's studio. Have you seen your photograph? We have seen human life on three planes. On which plane are you living?

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

Chapter Two  
God's First Man — The First Adam

As we daily observe the lives of men and women we see a vast difference in the quality of those lives.

We readily admit that people are living on totally different planes with a consequent vast divergence in character and conduct. We must seek the cause of such disparity. What or who is to blame?

If we acknowledge God to be the Creator of all things in His universe, then we are compelled to place the responsibility for such inequality either upon Him or upon man. It must be the result either of God's fiat or of man's choice. To say that it is due to the difference in the heredity, circumstances, environment or opportunities of people, is to beg the question altogether. Countless ones have come up out of the depths of poverty, illiteracy, superstition, affliction and persecution to heights of nobility in character and conduct. Many have fallen from heights of wealth, education, ease, opportunity and privilege to the lowest depths of sin and shame. Upon whom then should the blame rest for such inequality in human life? Is God responsible for it? The only fair way to answer this question is to turn to His own record of creation and to read what He says of His first man, and to determine upon what plane He intended him to live.

Genesis 1:26, 27, "*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*"

Genesis 1:31, "*And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.*"

If language has any power whatever to express thought, these words clearly teach us five things regarding God's first man,

1. That he was created by Someone who already existed.
2. That his creation was the result of God's deliberate, direct, creative will.
3. That he was created in the image of God.
4. That he was pronounced "very good."
5. That he was given dominion over all the earth and made the head of the entire terrestrial creation.

### **GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE**

God's first man was made just as God wanted all men to be. He was made after a pattern. God's first man came direct from God's own hand and bore a definite resemblance to his Creator. "The root idea of the Hebrew word translated 'image' is that of a shadow." God's first man, then, was God's shadow. He was like God. But in what respect?



To answer this question we are forced to ask another: What was God like? "*God* created *man*." The statement is made without any previous explanation of God Himself; He appears upon the first pages of revelation as a Being acting independently in the creation of a universe and of man with no explanation of Himself and with no reference whatever to His origin.

Who, then, created God? How many mothers have had to answer that query! It is, likewise, the first and greatest issue that confronts the philosopher as he studies into the secrets of the universe. In answering this question correctly one takes his first step in knowing who God is.

Scripture gives to men and women of faith an absolutely satisfying and final answer in the simple but sublime words, "In the beginning *God*." God never *became* for He always *was*. God is the great "I AM." "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." God had no beginning and will have no end. *From* everlasting *to* everlasting He is God. "For with thee is the fountain of life." "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." God is the Uncreated: the Always-Existent. He is the eternal, infinite One. He is the Beginning of all beginnings.

This, then, is what God is. But if this is what God is in what respect could God's first man ever be said to resemble Him? Let us press on in our search for an understanding of this great truth. While God never explains Himself in Scripture He does reveal Himself. He wants men to know who and what He is, for if we did not have this knowledge we could never know God's original intention for man who was made in His image.

Let us turn to the first twenty-five verses of the opening chapter of God's Word and see if we find any revelation of Himself that throws light upon the kind of resemblance God's first man bore to God. We read:

"God said . . ."

"God saw . . ."

"God divided . . ."

"God called . . ."

"God made . . ."

"God set . . ."

"God created . . ."

"God blessed. . ."

These phrases each record something which God did. Outward action is the expression of inward being. What one does reveals what one is.

"God said," therefore God must have thought.

"God blessed," therefore God must have loved.

"God created," therefore God must have willed.

Genesis 1:1-25 reveals personality. God is a Person. He is a Person who thinks, loves, and wills.

We have now found out two things about God. We have learned that God is the Uncreated, the Eternal, the Infinite, the Fountainhead of all life. And we have learned that He is a Person who thinks, loves and wills. The deduction which we may make

from this twofold revelation is that God is a Person who thinks, loves and wills on the plane of uncreated, unlimited, eternal, divine Life.

Are we ready now to answer the question, In what respect was God's first man like God? Perhaps we might clarify our thinking on one very fundamental point by first saying in what respect God's first man was not like Him.

Genesis 2:7, "*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*"

1 Corinthians 15:47, "*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*"

God was man's Creator. Man *became* a living soul. Adam was *formed* from the dust of the ground. He is of the earth, earthy. It will be clearly seen from these verses that God and God's first man Adam were not in the same order of beings nor did they live on the same plane of life.

God is *uncreated*, man is *created*. God is *infinite*, man is *finite*. God is *heavenly*, man is *earthy*. God is *divine*, man is *human*. Between what God is in His uncreated, essential, divine being and what man is in his created, finite, human being there is an absolutely impassable gulf, an immeasurable distance. God is not superman, man is not inferior God.

In what respect then did God's first man resemble God? Wherein was man God's shadow? It was in the wondrous gift of personality. Man is a person as God is a person. Let us trace this likeness in the opening chapters of Genesis.

As a person God thought and expressed His thought in words thus revealing the truth that intelligence is inherent in personality. God made Adam in His image.

Genesis 2:19,20, "*And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.*"

Adam was created with the power to think and to express thought in words. Adam had intelligence. As a person God loved and expressed His love in blessing thus revealing the truth that emotion is inherent in personality. God made Adam in His image.

Genesis 2:18, "*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; and I will make him an help meet for him.*"

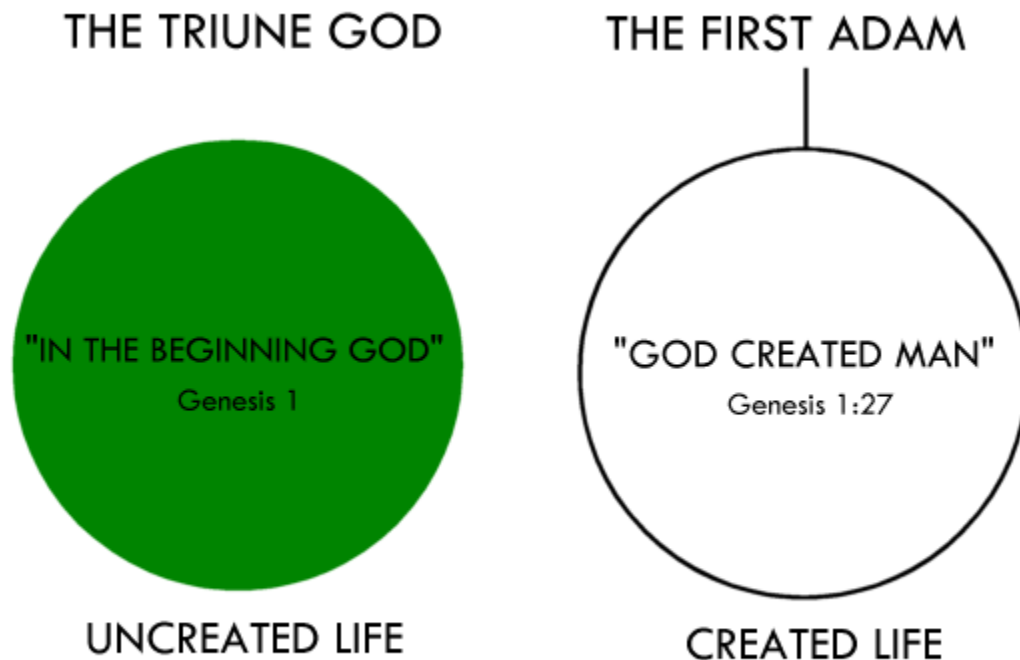
God gave Eve to Adam to be his wife and God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Adam was created with the power to love and to express that love in fidelity. Adam had emotion. As a person God willed and expressed His will in action thus revealing the truth that will is inherent in personality. God made Adam in His image.

Genesis 3:6, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, *she took of the fruit thereof*, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and *he did eat.*"

Adam was created with the power to will and to express that will in choice. Adam had volition.

God's first man was made in God's image in the sense of having a personality patterned after God's in its power to think, to love and to will; but with this difference, that God thought, loved and willed on the plane of uncreated, unlimited, eternal, divine life, while Adam thought, loved and willed on the plane of created, limited, finite, human life. The intellectual, emotional and volitional life of God's first man was perfect within a limited sphere. Above and beyond this was the perfection of God's personality within an unlimited sphere. (See Diagram 2.)



**Diagram 2: Uncreated and Created Life**

The resemblance which God's first man bore to God through likeness in personality made communion and cooperation between them possible; while the difference of plane on which each lived determined the basis of their relationship. God was the Creator, Adam was the created. God was the Sovereign, Adam was the subject.

It also set the boundaries of Adam's intellectual, emotional and volitional life; all must lie within the realm of divine sovereignty. The sovereignty of God expressed in His divine will was to be the circumference of Adam's human life. Unlimited liberty in thinking, loving and willing was given him. But one condition had to be met. He must think, love and will within the circle of God's will. Such a limitation was not for the purpose of making God a glorified despot: a Sovereign who ruled arbitrarily with no thought for the well being of His subject.

On the contrary the limitation was wholly beneficent. It was purely for the purpose of keeping man in the only sphere in which he could remain perfect, in which he could come into the fullest and most complete realization of the possibility of his being, in which, in fact, he could remain in communion and cooperation with God.

That God intended man to become even more than we see him to be in the unfallen first man of Eden the whole trend of the Bible shows. Adam was made in the image of God plus the capacity for sonship. "Man as originally created, was not only in the im-age of God he was also made to live in union with God, so that all his limitation might find its complement in the unlimited life of the Eternal. It is a great mistake to think of man as made, and then as put into some position where he might rise or fall, according to the capacity of his own personality. It is rather to be remembered that he was created in the image of God, and then put into a probationary position through which he was to pass unharmed to some larger form of existence, if his life were lived in union with the God who had created him. If however he chose a separate existence, and cut himself off from union, in that act he would fall" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, p. 28).

What would God's first man do? Would he accept the limitation and live his life in union with God, con-tent to let it be kept wholly within the circle of God's will, or would he exercise his will in a choice contrary to the will of God and so cut himself off from the life of God? There would be but one way to know the way of a test. God gave the test.

Genesis 2:8-9, "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Genesis 2:16-17, "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

"Of every tree thou mayest freely eat" — unlimited freedom of choice within the will of God. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it" — limitation of choice bounded by the will of God.

"The Lord God commanded the man saying, *Thou* shalt not —" Here was the Great Divide. This was the watershed between the sovereignty of the Creator and the subjection of the created. All on one side was within the circle of God's will: all on the other side was without the circle of God's will. All on one side meant union with

God: all on the other side meant separation from God. All on one side spelled life: all on the other side spelled death. God gave the test. Adam was to make the choice. God gave the command. Adam could obey or disobey.

Just here we must pause to penetrate a bit deeper into the study of Adam's personality to see if there was anything within him to hinder or to help him in the making of his choice. Did God make Adam so that he could will to live wholly within the circle of God's will and have every other part of his being in active sympathy with such a decision? In the very constitution of Adam's being did God place anything that would favour and foster such complete and continuous obedience?

Scripture does not say a great deal about the three-fold nature of man but what it does say is very illuminating and indubitable. It does tell us how man came to be what man now is.

Genesis 2:7, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Scripture names for us the component parts of man as thus created by God.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In Genesis 2:7 God gives us the divine order in the creation of the component parts of man.

### **The Formation of the Human Body**

"And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground." "The first man is of the earth, earthy." The earth was to be man's dwelling place. In order that it might have communication with the external world in which it dwelt, the body of man was formed of earth, and then equipped with five senses, sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. Because of its connection with the earthly, the body is the lowest part of man. Yet it has the exalted privilege of being the home of the spirit and of being its only outlet to the world of sense. The body is the port city of the human personality.

### **The Emanation of the Human Spirit**

"And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The divine Potter formed the human frame and then breathed into it the breath of life. This life principle which came as a direct emanation from God became the human spirit. Some one has aptly said, "Man is dust in breathed by Deity."

God Himself defines the human spirit in these words, "The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, searching all the innermost parts." The spirit is the crowning part of man's being. It is God's masterpiece in human creation. It is the part of man which has relationship to the unseen, spiritual world, which has fellowship with God. Through the spirit man apprehends, loves and worships God. Dr. A. T. Pierson says, "The spirit receives impressions of outward and material things through the soul and the body, but it belongs itself to a higher level and realm, and is capable of a direct knowledge of God by relation to its own higher senses and faculties. In an unfallen

state it was like a lofty observatory with an outlook upon a celestial firmament" (*The Bible and Spiritual Life*, p.116). The spirit is the capital city of the human personality.

### **The Creation of the Human Soul**

"And man became a living soul." Above the body and beneath the spirit stands the soul, the medium between the two. It has been said that in its relationship to the body and bodily senses it might be likened to the photographer's dark room. The impressions regarding the external world received through the senses are gathered up and conveyed to this dark room where they are developed into distinct expressions of thought, emotion or will.

In its relationship to the spirit and the spiritual world the soul might be likened to the judge's bench. The evidence regarding God and spiritual realities which the spirit finds in its research in the spiritual realm is brought to the bar of the soul and there either accepted or rejected.

Man, then, is a trinity; spirit, soul, and body are the integral parts of his triune being. In the constitution of God's first man two independent elements were used; the corporeal and the spiritual; the material and the immaterial. Each was essential because man was to be related to two worlds; the seen and the unseen; the material and the spiritual. He was made primarily for God and in order to have intercourse with God he must have a spirit capable of communion and fellow-ship with the Divine Spirit. But man was to be placed in God's material universe that he might have tangible relationship with the external world of people and things. So he must have a body capable of such contact and communication. Man was to be in close, continuous touch with both heaven and earth; with the external and the temporal; with the spiritual and the material.

When God placed the spirit within the body its home on earth, the union of these two produced a third part and man became a living soul. The soul uniting spirit and body gave man individuality, it was the cause of his existence as a distinct being. The soul, consisting of intellect, emotion and will became the central part the seat, as it were, of man's being.

The soul acted as the middleman between the spirit and the body; it was the bond which united them and the channel through which they acted upon each other. The soul stood thus midway between two worlds: through the body it was linked to the visible, material and earthly; through the spirit it was linked with the unseen, spiritual and heavenly. To it was given the power to determine which world should dominate man. The very great importance of this theme in its relationship to succeeding lessons and the intense desire that each reader may have a clear understanding of it leads me to quote at length from Andrew Murray's book, *The Spirit of Christ*:

"The Spirit quickening the body made man a living soul, a living person with the consciousness of himself. The soul was the meeting place, the point of union between body and spirit. Through the body, man, the living soul, stood related to the external world of sense; could influence it, or be influenced by it. Through the spirit he stood related to the spiritual world and the Spirit of God, whence he had his origin; could be the recipient and the minister of its life and power. Standing thus midway between two worlds, belonging to both, the soul had the power of

determining itself, of choosing or refusing the objects by which it was surrounded, and to which it stood related.

"In the constitution of these three parts of man's nature the spirit, as linking him with the Divine, was the highest; the body, connecting him with the sensible and the animal, the lowest; intermediate stood the soul, partaker of the nature of the others, the bond that united them, and through which they could act on each other. Its work as the central power was to maintain them in due relation; to keep the body, as the lowest, in subjection to the spirit; itself to receive through the spirit, as the higher, from the Divine Spirit what was waiting for its perfection; and so pass down even to the body, that by which it might be the partaker of the Spirit's perfection, and become a spiritual body.

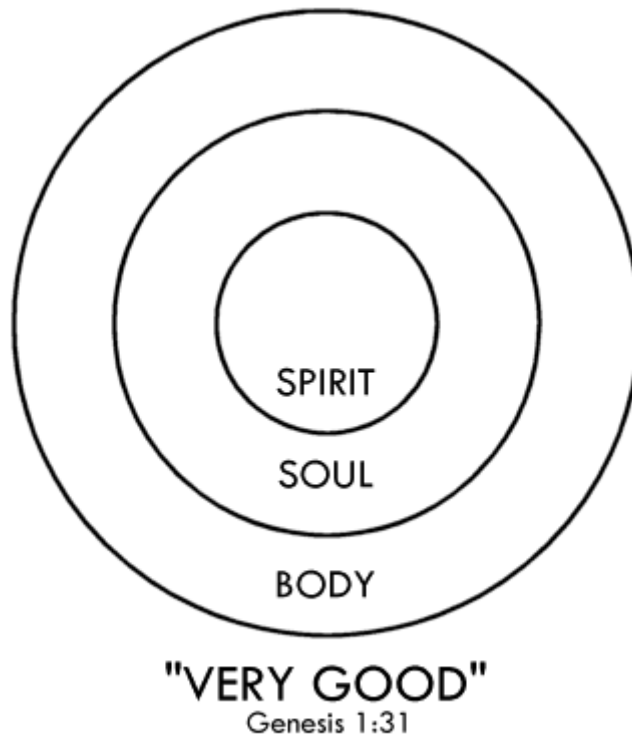
"The wondrous gifts with which the soul was endowed, specially those of consciousness and self-determination, or mind and will, were but the mould or vessel into which the life of the Spirit, the real substance and truth of the Divine life, was to be received and assimilated. They were a God-given capacity for making the knowledge and will of God its own. In doing this the personal life of the soul would have become filled and possessed with the life of the Spirit, the whole man would have become spiritual.

"To gather up what has been said, the spirit is the seat of our God-consciousness; the soul of our self-consciousness; the body of our world-consciousness. In the spirit God dwells: in the soul self, in the body sense."

It is clear from all this that God's original intention was that the human spirit through which alone man can be related to the Spirit of God and to the spiritual world should be the dominant element in the human personality. The spirit was to be sovereign and as long as it remained so the whole being would be kept spiritual.

But while the human spirit was to be sovereign in the realm of the human personality with both soul and body yielded to its dominance, yet it was to be subject in turn to a higher power. Dr. A. T. Pierson says, "One obvious lesson in this Biblical psychology is that God evidently designed that the human spirit, indwelt and ruled by the Holy Spirit, should keep man in constant touch with Himself, and maintain in everything its proper preeminence, ruling soul and body" (*The Bible and Spiritual Life*, p. 123). (See Diagram 3.)

## THE SINLESS ADAM



**Diagram 3: The Sinless Adam**

Thus we see that the human spirit was to be a sovereign under a Sovereign. It was also to be the middleman between the eternal and the temporal; the unseen and the seen; the divine and the human; the heavenly and the earthly. The spirit had its windows opened heavenward and Godward and through spiritual perception, insight and vision it was constantly receiving spiritual impressions which were to be sent out-ward by way of the soul to the body. The spirit through unbroken fellowship with the Holy Spirit was to be the channel through which the whole being of God's first man would be linked to the life of God and so made and kept spiritual.

This brief study of the threefold nature of God's first man, Adam, shows us that his human personality was so constituted that he could always think, love and will within the circle of God's will. He could choose to live under the authority of his divine Sovereign. There was nothing within himself to hinder perfect obedience to the will of God.

One other question remains to be answered. Was there anything without his life to hinder? Was Adam's environment conducive to complete and continuous obedience to God's will?

God placed His perfect man in a perfect environment. The picture given in Genesis of the garden of Eden is that of a place in which there was satisfaction and sufficiency for every need of man's spirit, soul and body. The Creator had made Himself responsible for meeting bountifully every need of His creature. Even the brief account given of the life of Adam in Eden reveals perfect adjustment to his



environment. Righteousness ruled; therefore, peace resulted. There was nothing within his environment to hinder perfect obedience to the will of God.

God not only placed this perfect man in a perfect environment but His own relationship with Adam was perfect. It was a relationship both of communion and cooperation.

Adam had communion with God. Man was made for God. There is ample Scriptural authority for this statement in such verses as Isaiah 43:7, 21; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11. The fact that man was made in the image of God in his intellectual, moral and volitional life shows that God desired fellowship with him and made him with the capacity for such fellowship which was not given to any other of His creatures. The beautiful words in Genesis 3:8, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," reveal God even taking the initiative in seeking communion and comradeship with Adam and Eve. So God's first man walked and talked with God as friend with friend; he was able to know and to enjoy God as a kindred nature; he was in inner, spiritual harmony with God.

God's first man also had cooperation with God in His governmental activities. Adam was God's vice-regent, as it were, over all His works: he was the executive instrument by divine appointment to carry out the divine purpose. God made Adam His representative as the visible monarch of all living things. "He had dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Within his own sphere he was made a sovereign, subordinate only to God.

One thing more remains to be said concerning God's first man. Adam was not only an individual but he was the federal head of the human race. God made His first man the head and representative of man. Bishop H. C. G. Moule in his *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, says: "Adam was a true individual, as truly as Abel. But, unlike his son, he was, what only one other Being has ever been, the moral, intelligent Head of a moral, intelligent race; not only the first specimen of a newly created Nature, but in such a sense the Spring of that nature to his after-kind that in him not only the individual but the race could, in some all important respects, be dealt with" (p. 168). Adam by God's appointment was the source of human life of all mankind: the head of the human family. He was God's first representative man. Through him in creation God established a union with the whole human race. Then He commanded Adam to be fruitful and multiply.

God's first man, then, was perfect; he was put in a perfect environment and he had perfect fellowship with God. Harmony reigned within himself, within all his relationships both with the inferior creatures beneath him and with the sovereign Creator above him. There was everything within and without his life to foster complete submission to the sovereignty of God and perfect obedience to His will. Would he be content to remain a sovereign under a Sovereign? Would he choose continuously to live within the circle of God's will? Would his whole personality be kept under the control of the Divine Spirit and so maintain its life on the spiritual plane? If so, then through this first man, made in His own image and controlled by His divine Spirit, God would people the earth with beings who would also bear His likeness, yield to His sovereignty, serve Him with fruitfulness, and live together in righteousness and peace.

G. Campbell Morgan in *The Crises of the Christ* states Adam's position before God in the following paragraph, "Finite will is to be tested, and it will stand or fall as it submits to or rebels against the Infinite Will of the Infinite God. Thus unfallen man was a being created in the image of God, living in union with God, cooperating in activity with God, having the points of limitation of his being marked by simple and definite commands laid upon him, gracious promises luring him to that which was highest on the hand, and a solemn sentence warning him from that which was lowest on the other. He was a sovereign under a Sovereignty, independent, but dependent. He had the right of will, but this could only be exercised in perpetual submission to the higher will of God" (p. 32).

Genesis 2:16-17, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, . . . of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *thou shalt not eat of it.*"

Here is God's will expressed in concrete form. Through this command God puts the test to His first man. Adam had the right to will and *he had the power to will Godward.*

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

## Chapter Three Life on the Lowest Plane — The Entrance of Sin Into Man

It must be evident to every thoughtful person that life on the spiritual plane is God's intention for man. In God's first man the divine Spirit had direct relationship with the human spirit and through it as a channel could so control the whole being as to make and keep it spiritual. That which was God's intention for his first man was also His purpose for all mankind.

But candidness compels us to admit that the over-whelming majority of the human race today is living on the lowest plane of life that of the natural man. In all parts of the world we see man out of adjustment with God, with his fellow men and with himself. Hatred, war, discontent, restlessness, crime, lawlessness, anarchy, prevail.

What then is the reason for such a terrible and tragic fall? Was God's human creation a colossal failure? Did He initiate something which He could not execute? Or must we find a reason for the present condition of humanity in something outside of God? Does the Bible tell us how that which God created without sin and pronounced "very good " became sinful and was denounced by Him as "no good "? Scriptural study of the history of the natural man gives a clear and full explanation.

### **THE CONDITION OF THE NATURAL MAN**

Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time ye were *without Christ*, being aliens from

the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having *no hope*, and *without God* in the world."

The Apostle Paul is writing to those in the church at Ephesus who were then living on the spiritual plane but who previously had lived on the plane of the natural. Paul says, "At that time" — when you were living on the lowest plane — "ye were without God, without Christ, and without hope."

1 John 5:11-12, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and *he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*"

Eternal life is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But Ephesians 2:12 says that the natural man is "without Christ," therefore he must be without eternal life. God offers unto every man the gift of eternal life which he has power to accept or to refuse. To accept it opens the way for him to the highest plane of life, that of the spiritual man; to refuse it leaves him on the lowest plane of life, that of the natural man.

Ephesians 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, *who were dead in trespasses and sins.*"

The natural man refuses the gift of eternal life, therefore he is "dead." Every person who has not accepted from the Father the gift of eternal life bestowed upon him in Christ Jesus, the Son, is described by God as "dead."

Perhaps the reader will think instantly of some unsaved relative or friend who seems to have abounding life and he will challenge, nay, even resent this statement regarding his condition. This person may be a perfect specimen of physical strength and energy. He may be an intellectual giant, perchance a fine classical scholar, abounding in worldly wisdom and knowledge. He may be a model of morality, living his personal, family and civic life on a high plane. He may even be religious, occasionally attending divine service and contributing toward the maintenance of church or temple. Surely God's description of the natural man does not fit him for he is abounding in life! How can such a man be described as "dead"? There seems to be abounding life in his whole being.

But let a test be made in the realm of his spirit. We have seen that the human spirit is the seat of God-consciousness and that in God's first man there was a direct and vital relationship between the divine Spirit of God and the human spirit of Adam. God's first man responded to God in communion and cooperation. A spiritual man delights to respond to every outreaching of God's grace and love toward him. Does your unsaved friend *respond to God*?

Talk with him about God and spiritual things and your very language is foreign and unintelligible to him, to say nothing of the truth you are attempting to convey. Invite him to go to God's house and he frankly tells you he prefers the club, the cinema or the guild. Give him a Bible to read and it seems insufferably dull and insipid to him and in no measure compares in interest with the newspaper or the latest novel. Invite him to spend an evening in your home in company with God's people and he is fearfully bored and out of place, not knowing how to act or what to say, and longing

for the time to depart. Speak to him of his personal spiritual need, explain to him his condition and danger, urge him to accept Christ as his personal Saviour and to ally himself openly with God's people, and he either ridicules the idea or resents it.

Something somewhere seems wrong with the man. Something is wrong with him in the realm of his spirit for there is no response whatsoever to God. There is apparently no God-consciousness. There is no sense of need of God; no desire for God. Something in the man seems *dead*. Something in the man is dead. Death reigns in his spirit.

### **ADAM, THE CHANNEL OF SIN'S ENTRANCE INTO THE HUMAN RACE**

God is the Author of all life and after His creation of living things "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was *very good*." But today death reigns everywhere. No living thing is exempt from its touch or its toll. It has wrought ruin everywhere. Surely God is not the author of death. From whence then did it come? God does not leave us in darkness on this question but in language simple enough for a child to understand He tells how death came into the world of living things.

Romans 5:12, "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

This clearly teaches that death is a result; that sin is the cause. Death came because of sin.

But how did sin come into the world? *Sin entered by one man*. The blame then for the entrance of sin and death into his beautiful world cannot be placed upon God, for in his own Word He absolutely clears Himself from such a charge.

But who could the man be through whom such terrible havoc, such awful disaster to the whole human race, was wrought? God never leaves an honest, truly seeking soul without an answer that satisfies. In Romans 5:12 God plainly says that all mankind was involved in the disaster caused by one man's sin so he must have been a representative man, one in whom the human race was latent. The context, Romans 5:13-23, sets in sharp contrast sin and death, salvation and life, and traces each to its source in the only two representative men of all history: Adam and Christ. A study of this passage clearly reveals Adam, God's first man, to have been the one through whom sin and death came, and Christ, God's second Man, to have been the One through whom came salvation and life.

But if one has any question in his mind regarding this passage God states the case boldly and unmistakably in

1 Corinthians 15:22, "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*"

Adam is the man through whom sin entered into the human race. The consequence of sin was death. But we have seen in our previous study that Adam was created

without sin and that he was put into an environment and enjoyed a fellowship with God both of which were conducive to a continuance in such a state of innocence and fellowship.

So the question forces itself upon one: How could sin enter into such a man with its blighting curse? How was the tragedy of death ever enacted in that beautiful garden? The story is told in the second and third chapters of Genesis. This portion of God's Word spiritually apprehended and humbly accepted gives an answer which satisfies every true and sincere believer.

To answer the question we need to define sin. What could Adam do that could be called sin? The answer is simple. The only sin that Adam could commit was to transgress God's divine law, to will to disobey the clearly revealed will of God. As long as Adam continued to will to live his whole life within the circle of God's revealed will he could not sin. Adam had the right to will but he could remain without sin only as he exercised his will in perpetual submission to the higher will of God. Sin, then, is known disobedience to the clearly revealed will of God. Sin is the wilful, deliberate, resistance of a subject to the rightful authority of a Sovereign. "Sin, in the Biblical view, consists in the revolt of the creature will from its rightful allegiance to the sovereign will of God, and the setting up a false independence, the substitution of a life-for-self for life-for-God" (James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 172). Sin as God Himself defines it is "transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). God called Adam's sin "transgression."

Let us see from God's own record how sin entered into Adam with its curse of death.

Genesis 2:16-17, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*"

Genesis 3:6, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, *she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*"

God gave Adam well-nigh unlimited liberty. But one commandment was imposed. But one transgression was possible. Of every other tree he could freely eat. Of only one tree was he forbidden to eat and even for this prohibition God had a beneficent reason. Adam was on trial. He ate of the forbidden fruit. He willed to have something which God for a loving and beneficent reason had willed that he should not have. By that one act he sinned for sin is the transgression of the law. By his own volition Adam deliberately transgressed a divinely marked boundary; he overstepped a clearly revealed divine limitation.

### **SATAN, THE ORIGINATOR OF SIN IN GOD'S UNIVERSE**

But some one may ask, When Adam was a perfect man with a sinless nature, living in a perfect environment and having perfect fellowship with God how could he be

tempted to disobey? With all in his own personality and all in his environment favouring his complete and continuous obedience to the will of God, from what source could temptation to disobedience and self-will come? It is a legitimate question and demands an answer which God gives.

Genesis 3:1, "Now *the serpent was more subtil* than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. *And he said unto the woman*, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

"Now the serpent was more *subtil* . . . and he *said* . . ." Here we have words used which can be used only in characteristics, attitudes and acts which belong to personality, either natural or supernatural. But was there any other person in the garden besides the Lord God and his two created beings, Adam and Eve? There evidently was. But it was some one who apparently desired to conceal his identity, so he came under the deceiving cover of impersonation. Who then was this other one?

The conversation between the serpent and Eve recorded in Genesis three reveals the twofold fact that this person is an enemy of God and that he is there in the garden for an evil purpose. Does Scripture give us any clue by which this cunning, wicked impersonator may be identified? It does. his name identifies him.

Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, *that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan*, which deceiveth the whole world: and he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Holy Scripture is a unity and Scripture interprets Scripture. "The serpent" of Genesis 3:1 is none other than "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" of Revelation 12:9 and 20:2.

In Revelation 12:9 he is revealed as a deceiver. His nature identifies him. The Bible tells us clearly that is the part he was playing in the garden of Eden in his first dealings with humanity. The finger prints of the arch deceiver are clearly discerned in Genesis 3.

1 Timothy 2:14, "And Adam was not deceived, but *the woman being deceived* was in the transgression."

2 Corinthians 11:3, "But I fear, lest by any means, as *the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty*, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

There is evidence then that before the creation of Adam and Eve there was in God's universe a being who was both a sinner and a traitor. Does God's Word give us any light upon who he is and how he came into such a condition?

Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:12-20 seem to give this clue. A careful study and comparison of these two passages with other Scriptures seem to indicate very clearly that the one referred to is none other than Satan.

The passage in Ezekiel reveals the truth regarding the person and position of Satan originally. It states that Satan was a created being and that he was created perfect. He was "full of wisdom," "perfect in beauty," "perfect in thy ways," "the sum of perfection was found in him."

Not only was he perfect as regards his person but he held a very exalted position in the service of God. He was "the anointed cherub that covereth" and served "in the holy mountain of God." Perhaps no other created being held so exalted a position or was so intimately connected with God.

That he also had some relationship to and power over God's created universe given to him by God Himself is seen in the two titles, "the prince of this world" (John 14:30) and "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2).

That he had been given a high position of trust to which he had been a traitor is very certain. He was a prince over a kingdom for three times the Lord Jesus called him "the prince of this world," and when he took the Lord into a high mountain and offered Him all the kingdoms of the world with their glory Jesus did not dispute his claim to their disposal.

But with all Satan's perfection and power, he was still a created being and, as such, he must be subservient to his Creator and remain dependent and obedient. Scripture, however, from beginning to end reveals Satan as God's archenemy. He is an open and avowed rebel. He is not a subject of the kingdom of light but is a sovereign over the kingdom of darkness.

When and how did this rebellion toward God take place? "The anointed cherub" who was "in the holy mountain" sinned.

Ezekiel 28:15-16, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . *thou hast sinned*: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God."

The sin that led to Satan's downfall is intimated in the words, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Ezekiel 28:17). Pride led to self-exaltation which expressed itself in self-will.

Let us now examine Isaiah 14:12-20 and see to what lengths self-exaltation carried Satan in rebellion against his Creator and Sovereign.

Isaiah 14:12-14, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!  
For thou hast said in thine heart,  
I will ascend into heaven,  
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:  
I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation . . . .  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;  
I will be like the most High."



Self-exaltation led to self-will, self-will led to rebellion against God, and Lucifer, son of the morning, became Satan, father of the night. The moment "the anointed cherub" said in his heart "I will" as opposed to God's will sin began. The moment the subject sought to dethrone the Sovereign by saying "I will be like the Most High" sin's work in the universe commenced. But it did not end there. The sin that began in the holy mountain of God was carried into the garden of Eden.

### **SATAN, THE DECEIVER AND THE TEMPTER, IN EDEN**

Satan, God's avowed enemy, is there. This apostate spirit is the fourth person in the garden of Eden. And what is his mission?

He is there with the definite, deliberate, diabolical purpose of tempting Adam and Eve to do just what he himself had done through an act of self-will to step outside the circle of God's will, to dethrone God by enthroning self. He is there to gain recruits for his rebel ranks; to win subjects for his kingdom of darkness and death.

It is instructive to follow the cunning machinations of this diabolical strategist as he succeeds in tempting Adam and Eve into doubt, disobedience and disloyalty. God grant that it may throw needed illumination upon the path of temptation some reader may be treading.

Let us ask and answer three questions:

What was Satan's aim in tempting Adam and Eve?  
What was Satan's method of approach to them?  
How did he achieve his success?

Satan's aim, let us remember, was to exalt himself to God's place of sovereignty and authority and to secure for himself the worship from God's created beings which belonged to God alone. So he was in Eden to draw Adam and Eve away from God, to persuade them into disobedience and disloyalty, which would automatically cast them out of God's kingdom into his own. To accomplish this he did not need to incite them to gross sin or vice; one act of disobedience would carry out his purpose. He needed only to destroy confidence in God and to lead them to disbelieve and disobey Him.

Satan's method of approach was very cunning and subtle. It was not the method of open warfare against God but that of undermining faith in God by malicious propaganda. Satan did not come out into the open and contest God's sovereignty over his created beings but he sought to discredit God in their sight by creating within them discontent with their circumstances and by holding before them a false Utopia, thus hoping to instigate a revolt against God.

His method has not changed from that day to this. He is attempting the same thing and using the same method now that he did 4,000 years ago. The seed germ of discontent and disorder sown in the garden of Eden has borne fruit and is reaping a terrible harvest in all parts of the world today. Churches and chapels are being demolished; Bibles are being torn to pieces; anti-Christian demonstrations are being



staged; threats are being made of dethroning God in his own universe. Back of all this subtle, efficient, destructive propaganda is the master mind of the first spiritual Bolshevnik who began his world revolution in the garden of Eden.

To accomplish his purpose there he put before Eve the lure of a far better condition of life than they enjoyed under God's beneficent, loving rule, and urged securing it by illegitimate, revolutionary means. Satan must reach the spirit of Adam and Eve and in some way break the connection between the divine and the human. He did this by the proffer of a knowledge even such as "the gods" possessed. Through the human spirit illumined by the divine Spirit they did know God, which knowledge was the *summum bonum* of benefit and blessing. But Satan intimated that there was more to be known which God was willfully and wrongfully withholding from them. They were not having their due.

To reach the spirit to which Satan had no means of access he must get at the soul. The emotions must be stimulated to desire this tree of the knowledge of good and evil which could make one wise. Their eyes must be opened to see how pleasant was this tree that they might covet its fruit.

So an indirect appeal was made to the soul through the senses. Satan gained his entrance to the inner-most being of Eve through the body. The tree was good for food so he tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Every part of the human personality had been undermined by this Satanic propaganda. Satan had ap-pealed to the whole man, spirit, soul and body but his method of approach had been from circumference to centre; from body through soul to spirit.

Let us examine God's Word to see how Satan achieved his success.

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

A subtle insinuation is couched in these words which was intended by the tempter to arouse suspicion of God's goodness. "Did God really tell you that you couldn't eat of every tree in this garden? Wasn't the garden made for you? Are you not labouring to dress it? Then haven't you a right to its fruit?" The devil did not come to Eve at once with a glaring accusation of God's unkindness but merely with a subtle insinuation. He knew that harmony reigned in the garden of Eden and that Adam and Eve were perfectly adjusted to each other, to their environment and to God. Satan laid hold upon the only thing he could in their external environment and used it to cause disruption in their relationship with God. Satan's aim was to create doubt first and thus gain a foothold by disturbing the inner harmony of Eve's moral being.

The reply of Eve showed that the devil's insinuating question had had the desired effect. She acknowledged God's goodness in granting them the liberty to eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden and admitted the one and only restriction. But in so doing she omitted from God's gracious promise the words "every " and "freely" and added to the prohibition the words "neither shall ye touch it," thus revealing a secret acquiescence in the serpent's insinuation against God's goodness. Doubt of God's goodness was at work in her heart so the devil grew bolder.

Eve not only stated the restriction made upon their liberty but also God's explicit warning of the penalty of death in case of disobedience, varying it however by changing God's Word "thou shalt surely die" to "lest ye die." Then Satan made a bold, shocking assertion, an out-and-out denial of God's Word, "Ye shall not surely die." This was immediately followed by his final and fatal appeal.

Genesis 3:5, "For God doth know that in the day ye eateth thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The bold blasphemy, the cunning deception, the seductive allurements of his sugar-coated lie, were worthy of the source from which they came. Satan implied in this diabolical statement that God was maliciously robbing man of knowledge which he not only had a right to possess but which would raise him to an exalted position hitherto undreamed.

"Your eyes shall be opened and *ye shall know*." Was not the desire to know a lawful one? Was not the ambition for self-improvement through the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge a legitimate one? Eve had been daily coming into a larger and fuller knowledge of God and his universe no doubt and now, if by merely eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil she could at once obtain a knowledge as limitless as God's own and be assured God's penalty of death would not be enacted why should she not eat of it?

Satan had reached the acme of evil when he had said, "I will be like the Most High," and now in some modified form suited to the innocence of the sinless pair he tempted them to a similar aspiration, "Ye shall be as gods." He held out to them the luring possibility of advancement in knowledge even to the plane of the divine and unseen.

In the appeal of Genesis 3:5 the tempter assailed the whole personality of the woman; intellect, emotion, and will. "Do not be such fools as to believe God's word when it is so evidently against all right and reason; do not be such dupes as to be cheated out of something you rightfully should have; do not be such cowards that you fear to assert your own will in this matter."

"Thus it is seen that at the back of the method of the devil is an aspersion cast upon the character of God. Man was made to question the goodness of law. Appealing to the intelligence of man, the enemy created an aspersion, which was calculated to change the attitude of his emotion, and so capture the final citadel, that namely of his will. He declared that man's intellectual nature was prevented from development by this limitation. By this declaration he created in the mind of man a question as to the goodness of the God who had made the law, and thus imperilled the revelation of the will to God, as he called it into a place of activity outside, and contrary to the will of God" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, p. 33).

### **THE SIN OF ADAM AND EVE AND ITS EFFECT UPON THEMSELVES**

Some response had to be made to such an appeal. The will must function in acceptance or rejection of such an accusation against God. There was no neutral

ground. Eve must take sides either with or against God. "*God said*" and "*the serpent said*," and they said totally contradictory things. Eve listened to Satan's voice rather than to God's. She believed the devil's lie rather than God's truth. "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty" (2 Corinthians II:3), and she ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam listened to Eve's voice rather than to God's. Eve enticed her husband through his affections and he ate of the forbidden fruit. He was the one to whom God had given the command. To eat of the fruit was a deliberate transgression of the divine law.

Genesis 3:6, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Genesis 3:17, "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."

Adam and Eve had the God-given right to will and the power to will Godward. They exercised the right to will and *they chose to will Satanward*. The moment they so chose they stepped outside the circle of God's will and into the realm of self-will. They dethroned God and enthroned self. That one act, that one choice, that one decision, was sin. Satan triumphed, sin entered, ruin ensued.

Sin penetrated to the innermost part of Adam's being, the spirit, the meeting place of God and man. And with what result? The very result which God had predicted — *death*. To apprehend the magnitude of sin, one must know the meaning of death.

And what is death? Mrs. McDonough in *God's Plan of Redemption* gives a clear and helpful answer. "The scientific definition of death helps us to perceive his meaning. It is as follows, 'Death is the falling out of correspondence with environment.' The following illustration will help to better understand the subject. Here is an eye of a human being, apparently able to see any object placed before it; the objects of nature, bathed- in the bright sunshine surround it, but there is no response from the eye. It does not see; for the optic nerve is severed. It is dead to the beauty before it.

"Here is a person whose ears are completely deafened. Birds are singing, bells are ringing, voices speaking, but those ears do not respond to the sound waves that are carrying melody to other ears which are open to receive the same. They are dead to sounds.

"Upon the very day of Adam and Eve's disobedience *sin severed the delicate intuitive knowledge of God in like spirit of Adam and Eve*. They failed to respond to Him who was their Environing Presence. They were dead to God . . . the death process established in the spirit of our first parents was quickly manifested throughout the whole of the inner man and after a time the possibility of dissolution of the body, which had been held in abeyance while man remained obedient and dependent before the Fall, became an actuality" (p. 33).

Death in its twofold aspect, spiritual, the separation of the human spirit of man from the divine Spirit of God, and physical, the separation of the spirit and the body of man, came by sin. A grain of truth was mixed with the lie of the serpent.

Genesis 3:7, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and *they knew that they were naked*; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Genesis 3:8, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and *Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God* amongst the trees of the garden."

Their eyes had indeed been opened but to behold what? Their own nakedness. They both acquired knowledge but of what? Their own sin and shame. They had come into a new self-consciousness but in that one act of sin they had lost God-consciousness. Their newly acquired knowledge served only to produce such a sense of shame that they counted themselves unfit for God's presence and were afraid to meet Him. The twilight hour of communion with God was robbed of all its sweetness and satisfaction by the sense of shame and sin. Eager response to God was changed into seeking refuge from God. Sin separated man from God and separation from God, who is Life, is death.

Physical death was the certain, even though more remote, result of sin. The judgment upon Adam included the curse of physical death.

Genesis 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: *for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*"

From the day Adam sinned the seed of physical death was in his body and finally reaped its harvest in full.

Genesis 5:5, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and *he died.*"

Thus we see God's sentence of death, both spiritual and physical, meted out as a result of sin.

### **THE EFFECT OF ADAM'S SIN UPON THE HUMAN RACE**

We have seen the disastrous effect of Adam and Eve's sin upon themselves. The question naturally arises, Did it affect any one else? Can we trace the sin in the human family back to the first sin in the first man, its federal head? Let us reason backward.

#### **Sin is a Fact**

Man is a sinner. One needs only to be closeted with himself for a single day to have sufficient proof of this statement. But if he should be loath to admit the evidence

given in his own thoughts, feelings, desires, words and acts, let him listen to the gossip of a small town, or read in the daily paper of doings in town or city. Man is a sinner. To deny the reality of sin is not only to disbelieve God's Word and to make Him a liar but it is to discredit one's own experience and observation.

1 John 1:8, 10, "If we say that we have no sin, *we deceive ourselves*, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, *we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*"

### **Sin is a Universal Fact**

Every man is a sinner. There are no exceptions to this rule except the Man, Christ Jesus. God's Word says, "There is no man that sinneth not."

Romans 3:10, "As it is written, There is *none righteous, no, not one.*"

Romans 3:12, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is *none that doeth good, no, not one.*"

Every truly honest man knows and admits that he is a sinner. At one time self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees brought to the Lord Jesus a woman taken in the act of adultery. To tempt Him that they might accuse Him, they asked if they should fulfil the law of Moses by stoning her. In reply the Lord Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And "being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one." Who among the readers of this book is "without sin"? Men differ in the degree of sin in the life but not in the fact of sin. Many men are naturally kind, generous, genial and loving but "there is none righteous."

### **Every Man is a Sinner Before He Sins**

Sin is far more than an act; it is a state, a nature, a disposition, a tendency. Sin is an inner reality before it is an outer manifestation. Sin is a desire before it is a deed.

James 1:15, R.V., "Then *the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death.*"

Who has not seen a baby give vent to temper, self-will, stubbornness and anger before it could talk or walk. Men were born in sin. We are all of us "by nature the children of wrath." Humanity inherited a sinful nature.

By God's appointment Adam was the federal head of the human family. He owns the seed of the race, and all the coming generations were in him. Adam was not only man but he was the womb of mankind. As forerunner of the human race, he was also its representative.

Therefore Adam's sin was not his sin alone. All mankind was vitally affected by it. Adam's sin put the poison of sin in the human germ; the result was the moral and spiritual ruin of the race, collectively and individually. Adam was created without sin. By an act of his own will he became a sinner. "What man thus became, men are."

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14:4). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). Adam fell and by that fall received a corrupt nature. Then he begat sons in his own likeness (Genesis 5:3). They inherited his sinful nature and so the poison of sin went on down through the human race until all men are involved.

Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so *death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

Romans 5:19, "For as *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*"

By Adam's disobedience all men were made sinners and the death sentence rested upon all.

Spiritual deterioration and death began immediately upon Adam's fall and the depths into which the human race soon sank are revealed in the following words.

Genesis 6:3, R.V., "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for in this going astray *they are flesh.*"

Genesis 6:5-6, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Physical deterioration began immediately upon Adam's fall and death and decay were the final outcome. Adam lived *and died*. The sad record of Genesis five shows that the seed of death implanted in Adam was transmitted to his posterity until each human being has to pay the death toll.

### **THE EFFECT OF ADAM'S SIN UPON THE SOCIAL ORDER**

In the garden of Eden before the tempter entered it we see the social order as God intended it to be. Adam and Eve were perfect and were living in perfect adjustment with God; therefore there was perfect adjustment between themselves. Godliness and holiness were followed by righteousness and peace.

But sin entered the human spirit and severed its relationship with the divine Spirit. Immediately man was thrown out of adjustment with God and *ungodliness* was the result.

Sin entered the human personality and reigned over every part of it. Man's whole being was thrown into confusion and conflict. Man was thrown out of adjustment with himself and *unholiness* was the result.

Sin entered the human relationship God had established between his first man and woman and produced friction. They were thrown out of adjustment with each other

and *unrighteousness* was the result. Each had sinned in eating of the forbidden fruit but each was unwilling to bear the blame for it. Eve had tempted Adam but Adam had of his own free will hearkened unto the voice of his wife and disobeyed God's command. When brought face to face with his sin Adam played the part of a churlish coward blaming both God and Eve for his own misdoing

Genesis 3:12, "And the man said, *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*"

The sin that had introduced disorder into man's relations with God and into his own personality now introduced it into the relationship of fellow beings. Friction between man and man began in God's social order. "The break upward brought the break crosswise. That is the tragic Eden crisis. It touches us all most intimately today. The gloom and blight of the Eden crisis has cast its inky shadow over all the race, and over all life, ever since" (S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on the Crises and After*, p. 56).

Its inky shadow cast gloom over that first home. The sin of the first parents was visited upon the first children. The eldest son Cain killed his brother Abel. Friction between parents bore fruit in murder between brothers. The maladjustment in God's social order begun in Eden has continued and grown apace into personal, family, civic, national and international frictions until the whole world today is one seething, struggling mass of discontent, envy, greed, suspicion, jealousy, hatred and revenge.

### **THE EFFECT OF ADAM'S SIN UPON THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE**

The blighting, withering effect of sin was felt in the material universe for even the earth was cursed because of the sin of Adam.

Genesis 3:17-19, "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: *cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.*"

The soil should henceforth be comparatively barren, man would no longer be blessed by its spontaneous, prodigal abundance but would have to coax from it by the sweat of his face and much suffering the necessities of life.

### **THE EFFECT OF ADAM'S SIN UPON GOD**

While the sin of Adam brought incalculable suffering and sorrow to himself and to his posterity yet the One most wounded and wronged by sin was God. The defeat of his purpose in the human race and the dethronement of Himself in his own universe was the twofold aim of Satan in Eden's tragedy. Behind the temptation was the tempter. "The fall began in heaven. Sin entered into God's house before it invaded man's.



Christ felt its sting before man felt its stab" (Patterson, *The Greater Life and Work of Christ*, p. 82). The sin enacted in Eden immediately created two very vital issues and brought God into a new relationship both to the tempted and the tempter, to the sinner and to Satan.

The issue at stake between God and God's first man was God's union with the human race. Through Adam in creation God had become united with humanity. But now through sin that union had of necessity been broken. God, who is absolute holiness, could never countenance nor condone sin, much less dwell in its presence. Sin must be punished and the sinner banished. Adam and Eve, through yielding to temptation, had become sinners. God who had been their beneficent Creator, their bountiful Provider, their intimate Companion, in the light of their transgression of his holy law must assume a different relationship to them and the race latent in them from that which He had before.

God could never remain holy and just unless sin were punished according to its deserts and in such a way as to satisfy fully his holiness. When He gave his command regarding the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil He had clearly stated the penalty if the command were disobeyed. To be true to Himself He must now exact that penalty for their sin. He must become their Judge and pronounce upon them the curse which sin merited.

But He had made the human race for Himself and his own glory. He could not willingly stand by and condemn it either to destruction or to eternal separation from Himself for He loved it with an everlasting love. God's holiness compelled Him to become a Judge but his love compelled Him to become a Redeemer. If his union with the human race had been broken through the first man's disobedience, He would send another Man to reestablish it through his obedience. If the race had been ruined through the first man's sin it should be redeemed through the second Man's Saviourhood. Thus God assumes a twofold relationship to Adam and Eve in their sin: that of a Judge and that of a Redeemer. The promise of a Saviour and the pronouncement of a doom were made. Both promise and pronouncement must be fulfilled.

So we see God in Eden seeking the sinner who, because of his sense of guilt and shame with its resultant fear, was hiding from Him.

Genesis 3:9, "*And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*"

What a marvellous unveiling of the infinite, abounding grace of God! A wounded, wronged God seeking a guilty, ungodly sinner! The Lord God taking the initiative to bring Adam and Eve back home to Himself And this is but the opening scene in the continuous unfolding of God's infinitely gracious dealings with fallen humanity from that hour to this.

God then brought Adam and Eve face to face with the fact and guilt of their sin and gave them a fair, full opportunity to confess it. But instead of a con-trite, brokenhearted confession there came a cowardly, halfhearted one mixed with much of palliation and shifting of responsibility.



Again the exceeding riches of God's grace shone forth in his giving the promise of a Saviour. "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" foretold to those guilty sinners who were soon to be banished from God's presence that He would open for them and for the race a way of access to Himself through the suffering of another.

Having now given vent to his infinite mercy and love in the gracious promise of a Saviour, God does full justice to his holy nature and his holy law in pronouncing a curse upon their sin. The God of all grace becomes the sinner's Judge. Sweat, suffering and sorrow are the awful consequences of sin. Then comes the sentence of death, for "the wages of sin is death," and the banishment from God's presence.

Genesis 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: *for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou.*"

Genesis 3:23-24, "*Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man.*"

Having dealt with the sinner in grace God now deals with Satan in wrath. There could be no mercy manifested here. The issue between God and Satan was a far more serious one. In the Eden temptation Satan had contested God's right to the ownership of and the dominion over his own creation. Through their yielding to sin God had lost the sovereignty over the world and the race. Such insult and treachery must be dealt with according to their deserts.

### **THE PROPHECY OF A CONFLICT AND THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF A DOOM**

God Himself declares a war against this arch-rebel that He will fight to the finish and in which He will show no mercy. God prophesies an age-long conflict and pronounces an eternal doom.

Genesis 3:15 "*And I will put enmity between thee and the women, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*"

From this sentence of eternal enmity there could be no reprieve.

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

## Chapter Four Life on the Lowest Plane — The Rule of Sin Over Man

Sin is a despot and the Bible shows very clearly that man came under the despotic rule of sin. Sin not only "entered" and "abounded," but it also "reigned" in man (Romans 5:12, 20-21). He lives under a threefold bondage, from which it is impossible for him to extricate himself.

*He is in bondage to sin.*

John 8:34, R.V., "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is *the bondservant* of sin."

*He is in bondage to self.*

2 Corinthians 5:15, "And that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth *live unto themselves*, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

*He is in bondage to Satan.*

2 Timothy 2:26, "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, *who are taken captive by him at his will.*"

The natural man is in helpless captivity to sin, self and Satan.

### **THE RUIN WROUGHT BY SIN IN THE HUMAN PERSONALITY**

Not only were *all men* drawn into the whirlpool of sin but *all of man* was ruined by its pollution. Man's personality was corrupted at the very centre and the dry rot of sin contaminated his whole being from center to circumference. Death breathed upon spirit, soul and body its destructive fumes. Sin stalked over the human being, that beautiful thing created in the image of God, and left its deadly trail everywhere, marring it until scarcely a trace of Godlikeness could be found. Sin caused civil war within the human personality.

#### **Sin Made The Human Spirit a Death Chamber**

The blasting breath of death first touched the human spirit. Sin closed the windows of the spirit Godward and made it a death chamber. Sin severed the human spirit's relationship with the divine Spirit.

Ephesians 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, *being alienated from the life of God* through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

Sin also dethroned the human spirit as sovereign over the human personality and made it a captive, nay, even a slave. Both soul and body were permeated with sin and were brought under sin's control. Each claimed and sought an equal right to the rule of man. The immediate effect of sin was the complete inversion of the

relationship between the spiritual and the physical in human nature. The fall of man from the plane of the spiritual to the plane of the natural took place.

"In the fall the soul refused the rule of the spirit and became the slave of the body with its appetites. Man became flesh; the spirit lost its destined place of rule, and became little more than a dormant power; it was no longer the ruling principle but a struggling captive. And the spirit now stands in opposition to the flesh, the name for the life of soul and body together in their subjection to sin" (Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ*, p. 34).

So the natural man "who is born of the flesh" is flesh. He is of the earth, earthy, and dominated by the flesh rather than by the spirit. The human spirit is darkened, deadened and dethroned.

### **Sin Made the Human Soul a Ruin**

Sin invaded the realm of the soul and laid hold upon the intellectual, emotional, and volitional life.

1. The mind of man was blinded.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom *the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Titus 1:15, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but *even their mind and conscience is defiled.*"

Colossians 1:21, "And you, that were sometime *alienated and enemies in your mind* by wicked works yet now hath he reconciled."

God's first man was made with the capacity for knowing God and one cannot help but believe that had Adam continued to live his life entirely within the circle of God's will that capacity would have been enlarged and enriched. But he sought knowledge God had willed he should not have. By that one act of self-will he placed his intellect outside the circle of God's will. He had the knowledge of evil but he had neither the wisdom nor the power to resist it. As a result sin wrought such ruin in the mind of God was compelled to say "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). He even calls evil, good and good, evil.

Separated from God man's mind became so darkened that his thinking is materialistic. "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." God is eternal and spiritual and can never apprehended by what is merely temporal and natural. Apart from living union and communion with God the operation of the human intellect is entirely within the realm of material things.

Separated from God man's mind became so darkened that his thinking is sensual. The soul, unaided by the spirit, in its struggle with sin is open to continuous and terrible temptation through the body.

Separated from God man's mind became so darkened that his thinking is rationalistic. Being outside of God's will his thinking is inevitably outside of God's thought. His wisdom is not God's wisdom: in fact God draws a clean-cut line between His wisdom and that of the natural man.

1 Corinthians 1:20-21, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? *hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* For after that in the wisdom of God *the world by wisdom knew not God*, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

The wisdom of the natural man has its source in himself. He rejects anything and everything which cannot be apprehended and explained by his own unaided reason.

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But *the naturel man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*: for they are foolishness unto him: *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned."

Sin has so twisted and perverted the intellect of the natural man and Satan has so blinded his mind that he often thinks he knows more than God. Pride leads him to exalt his own mentality to such an extent that, if God says anything which his tiny intellect and puny reason cannot comprehend, then he declares God's saying "foolishness." He boldly proclaims God's sacred truth to be fable; God's eternal Word to be an earth-born myth. His endeavour to fathom God's ocean of truth with his little teacup of a mind is pathetic, and his arrogant method of casting aside God's supernatural revelation when it goes contrary to his sin-saturated reason is pitiful indeed.

2. The heart of man was defiled.

Jeremiah 17:9, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*"

Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, *out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: *all these evil things come from within*, and defile the man."

What a picture of the human heart! Yet it is a true one because it was taken by the divine Photographer "who knows what was in man." Who can look upon this awful picture and others given on the same divine authority, such as Romans 1:29-32, Galatians. 5:17-21, Psalm 14:1-3, and not call man's case absolutely hopeless except somehow a miracle be wrought?

Man was made to love God with all his mind, heart, strength and soul. His heart was created with the capacity to respond to the love of God with love. Man was made to love his fellowmen. God wishes man to love his neighbour as himself.

But what is the condition in the world today both as regards man's relationship to God and to his neighbour? It is an awful but a tragically true prediction which God made in His Word of the present world condition.

2 Timothy 3:1-4, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*"

When did man fall into such an evil state as is here described? The moment God's first man stepped outside of God's will by his own voluntary choice and carried the human race with him, that moment he dethroned God and enthroned self in his own affections. From that moment man left to himself has been inherently and incurably selfish.

3. The will of man was perverted.

To will to do God's will is man's highest privilege, his most godlike prerogative. To live wholly within the will of God is to have righteousness, peace and harmony reign everywhere. This was God's intention in His universe. All angelic beings, as well as man, were made to be obedient subjects of God the Creator. But in Satan pride led to self-will; self-will to rebellion; rebellion to refusal of authority; and the refusal of authority to lawlessness. Satan, having stepped outside the will of God and become a rebel, tempted Adam and Eve to do the same. They yielded to his temptation and ever since the will of mankind has been off the main track.

But if man has not been willing to submit to the will of God which is always kind, beneficent and loving, surely he will not submit to the will of his fellow-man which is often selfish, tyrannical and despotic. So the world of politics, commerce, industry, education and even religion, is intersected with side lines built by the ingenuity of masterful minds who wish to satisfy their unquenchable thirst for power over other men's lives or their insatiable thirst for other men's possessions. A heaven-inspired description of the perversion sin made in man's will and of the lengths of lawlessness into which it led him, is given in these verses:

Judges 17:6, "In those days there was no king in Israel, *but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*"

Romans 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is *not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*"

G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, sums up the ruin wrought in the human soul by Adam's fall as follows: "Thus in the spiritual part of his nature, man by the fall has become unlike God, in that his intelligence operates wholly within the material realm, whereas the divine wisdom is spiritual, and therefore explanatory of all material facts; his emotion acts from wrong principles of self-love, whereas the divine love ever operates upon the principle of love for others; and his will asserts itself upon the basis of passion for mastery, whereas the divine will insists upon obedience, through determination to serve the highest interests of others."

### **Sin Made the Human Body a Battlefield**

Sin not only invaded the realm of the spirit and the soul but also that of the body and made that which was intended to be the spirit's congenial home its prison house. That which should have been spiritual tends to become sensual. That which God purposed to be the channel through which the spirit within man could touch the external world and bring blessing to it was turned into the instrument through which Satan reached the spirit with his defilement. The body became Satan's broadcasting station.

Romans 7:23, "But I see another law in my members, warring, against the law of my mind, and *bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*"

In Paul's exhortation to those who had accepted Christ as Saviour, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof," he implied that the body of the natural man had been sin's territory. The members of the body became Satan's tools and instruments of sin.

Romans 6:13, "Neither yield ye *your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Romans 7:5, R.V., " or when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, *wrought in our members* to bring forth fruit unto death."

The human body defiled by sin is corrupt, dishonoured and weak and it awaits deliverance from a bondage under which it groans (Romans 8:23).

2 Corinthians 5:4, "We *that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened*: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

### **THE MANIFESTATION OF SIN IN THE NATURAL MAN**

Sin began to do its deadly work at the core of Adam's being. This core, his human nature, became sinful. Sin became its native atmosphere. Sin became its governing, impelling principle. The fountainhead of his thoughts, emotions, attitudes, instincts and purposes, was vitiated by sin.

The word we commonly use today to express this sinful root is *self*. The core of the natural man is self. Scripture gives us another name. That corrupt human nature, that inborn tendency to evil in all men received by inheritance from our first parents, is called "the old man."

Colossians 3:9, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off *the old man* with his deeds." (Cf. Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22.)

But man is not a silent, inactive creature. His thoughts are expressed in words; his instincts are translated into actions; so if the fountain is corrupt, then that which flows out from it will be correspondingly corrupt. This inner nature manifests itself in outward acts. The hidden desires of "the old man" come to the surface in deeds. Covetousness grows into theft; deceit becomes falsehood; impurity of thought and desire manifest themselves in sins of the flesh; unforgiveness and hatred crystallize into revenge and murder; fear becomes fretting; unbelief shades off into worry; dislike degenerates into backbiting; impatience becomes nagging; dissatisfaction and discontent clothe themselves with murmuring and complaining; self-righteousness slips into censoriousness; pride takes on the colour of boastfulness; envy becomes slander; ambition arms itself for war; selfishness grows into oppression; and jealousy attempts to end its torment in suicide or homicide.

This truth is made very plain in the Bible in the clear cut distinction between *sin* and *sins*.

1 John 1:8-9, "If we say that we have *no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess *our sins*, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our sins*, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Leon Tucker in his *Studies in Romans* states the difference as follows:

"Sin is character; sins are conduct.  
Sin is the centre; sins are the circumference.  
Sin is the root; sins are the fruit.  
Sin is the producer; sins are the product.  
Sin is the sire; sins are his offspring.  
Sin is the fountain; sins are its flow.  
Sin is what we are; sins are what we do."

Sin then is the old nature itself; sins are the manifestations of the old nature.

This picture of the ravages of sin in the life of the natural man is an exceedingly dark one but a thorough, prayerful study of God's Word on this subject together with an honest observation of human life as it is must convince an open-minded, humble man that it is a true picture. It does not mean that each person has committed every one of these sins. There is a difference in the degree of sin manifested in the natural man but not in the fact of inherent sin. God who knows what is in man says, "There is none righteous; no, not one." It does mean that every man is a sinner in the sight of God and that the whole world is guilty before Him (Romans 3:19). It does mean that man who was made in the image of God has become flesh.

### **THE DESTINY OF THE NATURAL MAN**

God and sin cannot dwell together; they cannot stay in the same place at the same time for they are mutually exclusive. They are exact opposites. Perhaps you are now sitting in a room full of light; a few hours will pass by and it will be filled with darkness. Where has the light gone? It has been displaced by darkness. Again a few hours pass by and the room is filled with light. Where has the darkness gone? It has

been displaced by light. Light and darkness cannot dwell together; they are exact opposites; they are mutually exclusive.

1 John 1:5-6, "*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*"

Ephesians 5:8, "*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.*"

God is light, sin is darkness; therefore God must displace sin or sin displaces God. God and sin cannot stay in the same place at the same time for they are mutually exclusive.

Sin separated Adam from God; it made him want to hide from God's presence. Sin separated God from Adam and compelled Him to pronounce the sentence of death and to send him forth from the garden of Eden.

If God cannot dwell with sin in the sinner on earth neither could He dwell with sin in the sinner in Heaven So if the natural man persists in his sin and rejects the way of salvation which God provides in Christ Jesus, by that very choice he debars himself from the presence of God throughout eternity. His own unrighteousness will then shut him out of the Kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9, "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? "*

Revelation 21:27, "*And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*"

Let us now sum up the truth we have studied thus far. God's first man, Adam, was without sin; he was created in God's image on the plane of human life. He was made with the capacity for life on the highest plane, the spiritual, and with the power to choose such a life. God made man with his face turning Godward. God's will was both the centre and the circumference of his life: consequently he lived in righteousness and peace because in perfect adjustment with God, with himself, and with all created beings.

But Adam chose to disobey God's command. He used his power to choice Satanward, and placed his life voluntarily under Satan's sovereignty. He stepped outside of God's sphere of righteousness, light and life into Satan's sphere of sin, darkness and death. He dethroned God and enthroned self. He ceased to be spiritual and became flesh. Sin made him a sinner with his face turning Satanward and his course tending downward. Self-will became both the centre and the circumference of his life; consequently he lives in ungodliness, unrighteousness and discord because there was maladjustment with God, with himself, and with all created beings.

Adam himself was the father of children. He was not merely an individual creation of God but he was the appointed federal head of the human race. All the evil consequences of sin in him were transmitted to all men so that by nature all men are



guilty and defiled. The most awful consequence of sin, however, was not the moral and spiritual ruin of the human race but the denial of the Godhood of God in His own universe.

This view of the origin and the consequences of sin, even though it is so clearly taught in God's Word, is not accepted by all. Sin even in many pulpits today is treated very lightly if not passed over altogether. Nevertheless every one knows that humanity is saturated with sin and that sin is really at the bottom of all the world's trouble. But many people are unwilling to admit the real nature of sin. They treat it like a superficial skin disease rather than like a malignant cancer.

Men are unwilling to acknowledge the truth of God's estimate of the natural man, that left to himself he is hopelessly, incurably bad. They place the blame of his misconduct onto his environment or limited circumstances and by seeking to improve these external conditions and to afford him larger opportunities through education and civilization they believe he can be evolved into what God intended him to be.

Such thinking is due to a fundamental misconception of what sin is. The essence of the first sin in Eden is clearly defined in God's Word and it is the essence of all sin from that day to this.

1 John 3:4, R.V., "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness, and *sin is lawlessness.*"

The exceeding sinfulness of Adam's sin lay in the fact that it was high treason of the created against the Creator; of the subject against the Sovereign. Such at heart is all sin. The natural man is a spiritual Bolshevik.

Man is not only guilty and defiled but he is rebellious and lawless. He is not only separated from God by sin but he is unreconciled by enmity. In God's sight he is a sinner, an enemy, an outlaw. (See Diagram 4.)

## THE SINFUL ADAM



"NO GOOD"

Romans 7:18

**Diagram 4: The Sinful Adam**

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

## Chapter Five Satan and God in Conflict

That evil exists in this world no one could deny. Evil forces are at work in countless ways and through manifold channels. An evil power operates everywhere working intelligently for the degeneration of mankind and for the defeat of God. There is in the world an aggressive opposition to God and to God's purpose.

Power is the product of personality, therefore the acknowledgment of the presence of power necessitates the recognition of the presence of a personality originating and directing it.

Nowhere in the Bible is evil treated as a mere abstraction. A lie is the spoken language of a liar.

*Acts 5:3, "But Peter said, Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land."*

A murder is the actualized desire of a murderer.

1 John 3:12, "Not as *Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.*"

Ananias was the mouthpiece and Cain was the tool of another. Behind the human personality was a supernatural personality. Their evil was the revealed power of a concealed person.

The Bible tells us that such an evil one exists. Christ is the authority for the statement that there is an evil one and that he is the devil.

Matthew 13:19, R.V., "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, *then cometh the evil one*, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart."

Matthew 13:39, "*The enemy that sowed them is the devil*; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

Good forces are at work also. A good power operates everywhere intelligently for the regeneration of mankind and for the exaltation of God. There is in the world an aggressive opposition to Satan and to Satan's purpose.

Nowhere in the Bible is good spoken of as a mere abstraction. It is invariably the product of personality. Christ is the authority for the statement that there is a good one and that He is God.

Matthew 13:24, "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto *a man which sowed good seed in his field.*"

Matthew 13:37, "He answered and said unto them, *He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.*"

Luke 18:19, "Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *none is good, save one, that is, God.*"

The evil one is the antithesis of the Good One. Scripture sets Satan forth as the greatest enemy of both God and man. This is clearly seen in the names and titles given him.

He is called "*Satan*," which means opponent or adversary. This title is used of him fifty-six times and invariably reveals him as the opponent of God and the adversary of man.

Matthew 4:10, "Then saith Jesus unto him, *Get thee hence, Satan*: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because *your adversary* the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

He is called "*the devil*," which means slanderer or accuser. This title occurs thirty-five times in the Bible and shows him to be the slanderer of God and the accuser of man.

Matthew 13:39, "*The enemy that sowed them is the devil*; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

Revelation 12:10, "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."

The devil slanders God to man (Genesis 3:1-7) and man to God (Job 1:9-12; 2:1-7).

He is called "*the wicked one*."

Matthew 13:19, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh *the wicked one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart."

He is not only the personification of evil, "the wicked one," but he is the source of evil in others.

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

The devil is a liar and cannot speak the truth. He is a murderer and bent on the ruin and destruction of men. He was the first sinner; therefore he is the forefather of sinners.

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

He is called "*the tempter*." He tempted the Son of man and he tempts all men.

Matthew 4:3, "And when *the tempter* came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

1 Thessalonians. 3:5, "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means *the tempter have tempted you*, and our labour be in vain."

He is called "*the deceiver*." He deceives both individuals and nations. He began his wicked work in Eden by deceiving Eve.

Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, *which deceiveth the whole world*: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

1 Timothy 2:14, "And Adam was not deceived, but *the woman being deceived* was in the transgression."

On the threshold of divine revelation we read the prophecy of a conflict between Satan and God and every page from that on is but an unfolding of its progress toward its divinely appointed end, the ultimate and absolute defeat of Satan, the eternal and perfect victory of God.

### **THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CONFLICT**

That a good God created everything good is a logical supposition as the character of God must be expressed in His works. But when God says that every creation of His was "very good," then the statement is lifted out of the realm of supposition into that of fact.

God, then, did not create evil nor did He create the evil one as the evil one. From whence then did evil come? How did "the anointed cherub" become the "devil," "the wicked one," "the tempter," "the deceiver"? How did the beautiful archangel who held the highest rank in heaven become the diabolical traitor who will be cast into the depths of hell? How did he who "abode in the truth" become an apostate and "the father of lies"?

We have seen already that it was because he said,

"I will ascend *into heaven*.  
I will exalt *my throne* above the stars of God.  
I will *sit* also upon the mount of the congregation.  
I will *ascend above the clouds*.  
I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH."

Every word of this defiant, presumptuous declaration is the very breath of treason and anarchy. Lucifer is unwilling longer to be a subject in and a prince over the world; he is determined not to be a subordinate but a sovereign.

God could brook no such independence of action; He could countenance no such effrontery to His sovereignty over the universe or His moral government of created beings. Such treason brought Satan and God into deadly conflict.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT

The die had been cast. Satan was henceforth to contest with God the possession of the earth and all therein; to set himself up as a rival claimant to the world's sovereignty and to man's worship. He would establish a kingdom of his own. God, for a purpose which we shall understand as we proceed with the unfolding of His wondrous plan of redemption, permitted Satan to go forward with his evil designs.

### Two Sovereigns

There are now in the universe two separate distinct kingdoms, the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Two Sovereigns claim authority over Heaven and earth.

By His creatorship God is the rightful Lord for all things were created by Him and for Him. God has never given away to any created being, angelic or human, any part of His universe. He holds the possession of the whole universe in perpetuity.

Deuteronomy 10:14, "*Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.*"

Psalms 24:1, "*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*"

The Kingdom of God is the central government, the only government recognized by God and the spiritual hosts of heaven and earth. It is composed of all moral intelligences, angelic or human, celestial or earthly, of all centuries and all climes, who willingly place themselves within the circle of the divine will and who of their own free choice acknowledge and accept God as their Sovereign. The Kingdom of God embraces the entire universe over which God is enthroned as the absolute Sovereign.

The Lord Jesus teaches that there is such a Kingdom of God and who are eligible to citizenship in it.

Luke 13:28-29, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, *in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.* And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down *in the kingdom of God.*"

John 3:5, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*"

God states with clearness the essential credentials for entrance into His kingdom.

James 2:5, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world *rich in faith*, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to *them that love him?*"

However unthinkable it may seem there is also in God's universe a kingdom of Satan. The Lord Jesus teaches that there is such a kingdom. On one occasion when casting out a demon some of the people charged Him with casting out demons

through Beelzebub the chief of demons. Jesus made the following reply in which He brought the kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God into sharpest contrast.

Luke 11:17-20, "But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, *how shall his kingdom stand?* because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt *the kingdom of God is come upon you.*"

God acknowledges that Satan did set up a kingdom and that he sits on a throne of his own making.

Revelation 2:13, R.V., "I know where thou dwellest, *even where Satan's throne is*; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, *where Satan dwelleth.*"

Christ never acknowledged Satan to be king but three times He did call him "the prince of this world."

John 12:31, "Now is the judgment of this world: *now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*"

God also acknowledges the worship Satan has succeeded in obtaining for He calls him "the god of this world."

2 Corinthians 4:4, "In whom *the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.*"

There is still another title given him in Scripture which shows that Satan not only obtained and exercises great power on earth among men but that he carried his rebellion against God even into Heaven and secured a following among the angelic host.

Ephesians 2:2, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, *according to the prince of the power of the air*, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

Ephesians 6:12, R.V., "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, *but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*"

It is evident, then, that through Satan's treason and Adam's disobedience Satan gained a temporary conquest of the earth, which became a revolted province in God's universe. Satan is a sovereign over a rebel government; it is a government against government. It is composed of all moral intelligences, angelic or human, celestial or earthly, of all centuries and of all climes, who are without the circle of the

divine will and who continue to be subjects of Satan. The kingdom of Satan embraces the whole world of man-kind that is without the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Two Spheres**

In a recent number of the *National Geographic Magazine* there is a remarkable picture. It was a view taken from a hydroplane at an elevation of five thousand feet of two rivers, the Negro and the Amazon, meeting and mingling. The picture reveals two distinct streams, each identified by its colour. The waters of the Negro are black, those of the Amazon yellow, and even at the place where they meet the sharp colour line of distinction can be seen.

One looking down upon humanity from the viewpoint of the heavenlies can see in this world two distinct streams of life, the natural and the spiritual, each easily identified by its colour. The waters of the natural are black, those of the spiritual yellow, and even at the place where they meet and mingle whether in business, in society or in the home, the sharp colour line of distinction may be seen.

The Negro and the Amazon have different sources and each partakes all through its course of the colour of the water at the fountainhead. The natural and the spiritual in human life come from two distinct sources and each partakes all through its course of the quality of life at its fountainhead.

There are two spheres into which all humanity is divided; the one is the sphere of sin and the other is the sphere of righteousness. These two spheres are identified by three outstanding characteristics: the sphere of sin by darkness, death and disorder; the sphere of righteousness by light, life and liberty. Satan is the sovereign in the sphere of sin and Christ is the Sovereign in the sphere of righteousness.

That there are these two spheres of life and that Christ Jesus died and rose again to bring men out of the one into the other is declared in many passages of Scripture. We shall study only three passages. In Paul's defence before Agrippa he states his God-given commission as a minister and a missionary to the Gentiles. God told Paul exactly what He expected him to do.

Acts 26:17-18, "Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and *to turn them from darkness to light*, and *from the power of Satan unto God*, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Those to whom Paul preached were blinded, befogged, bound men and he was sent that they might be enlightened and emancipated. They were to be turned from something to Something, they were to be turned from some one to Some One.

Colossians 1:13, R.V., "Who *delivered us out of the power of darkness*, and *translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love*."

The believer has been *rescued from Satan's dominion* and removed into God's Kingdom.



Ephesians 5:8, R.V., "For ye were *once darkness*, but are *now light* in the Lord: walk as children of light."

There are these two sharply contrasted and distinctly marked spheres in which men live and each reader this moment is in one or the other of these spheres.

### **Two Seeds**

With the defection of Adam Satan thought he had won the first step in God's defeat and dethronement. A terrible conflict began. God did not minimize its sinister seriousness but on the very threshold of the conflict He triumphantly claimed victory over his enemy.

Genesis 3:15, "And *I will put enmity* between thee and the woman, and *between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head*, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This prophecy-promise contains God's declaration of war. A battle is to be fought to a finish between two seeds. The issue at stake is the sovereignty of God. The immediate object in the conflict is the redemption and reconciliation of the human race ruined through sin. The ultimate object is the restoration to God of undivided sovereignty over all His universe; in other words the rule of the Kingdom of God.

Enmity is to exist between two seeds the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Satan's seed traced through Scripture is the Antichrist; the woman's seed is the Christ. Toward these two persons pitted against each other in a final conflict all Scripture prophecy converges.

Satan knows that Jesus Christ is "the seed of the woman." It is He whom the devil hates. Ever since this first Messianic prophecy was uttered in Eden Satan's virulent attacks have been against the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. From the moment God said "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" until Christ, the Saviour, fulfilling that prophecy on Calvary cried, "It is finished," Satan waged incessant warfare against the *Person* of the Lord Jesus.

Old Testament history unfolds to view repeated at-tempts to destroy the line through which "the woman's seed" would come, thus preventing the incarnation. These being brought to nought by God's protecting intervention, he then sought to kill the Christ Child at birth. Failing in this he tried to thwart the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose in His Son by tempting the Lord Jesus in the wilderness to declare His independence of God. Defeated in his direct appeal he used indirect means to keep Him from the Cross of Calvary. He used both Christ's enemies and His friends as his tools. He instigated His enemies to kill Him and repeated attempts were made upon His life. He used His friends to dissuade Him from the voluntary sacrifice of Himself as the world's Saviour. His defeat in all these varied attempts maddened him into an attack upon the spirit, soul and body of the Son of Man in Gethsemane, his last futile effort to blockade the way to Calvary. Jesus Christ went to the Cross, He died and rose from the tomb: the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head.

Failing to hurt the Person of the Lord Jesus Satan has been occupied through the past nineteen centuries with attempts to nullify His work. He has done this by

deceiving men and blinding their minds thus leading them to disbelieve and deny the truth of the Gospel. By so doing he hopes to delay the final fulfilment of the prophecy regarding his own utter defeat.

From the moment of the pronouncement of this prophecy- promise God has made steady progress in its fulfilment. In the garden of Eden it was *announced*; in the manger cradle at Bethlehem it was *actualized*; on the Cross of Calvary it was *accomplished*; and on Mount Olivet it will be *attested*.

The kingdom belongs to God. Satan maintains his claim only as a traitor and an usurper. Christ came, lived, died, rose, ascended into Heaven and will come again that He may sit upon His throne and reign (Acts 2:30) until every foe is conquered (Acts 2:35) and all is put again under the divine sovereignty of the triune God (1 Corinthians 15:22-28).

In Eden the final fate of Satan is clearly announced. "It shall bruise thy *head*." It is to be a fatal stroke which effects his ultimate defeat, dethronement and destruction. The doom pronounced upon the devil in Genesis 3:14-15 is an eternal doom: the end for him is eternal torment in the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

In the manger cradle of Bethlehem the final fate of Satan is actualized. The incarnation of the Lord of Heaven means the beginning of the end for Satan, and he knows it. That is why he fought the birth of the Christ-child and why he now denies the God-breathed truth of the Virgin Birth. His destruction was actualized when God-manifest-in-Christ entered openly and aggressively into the field of operation to lead His forces on to victory.

On the Cross of Calvary the final fate of Satan was accomplished. There his doom was sealed. God's eternal purpose in Christ's Saviourhood was realized. Henceforth Heaven looks upon the devil as a defeated foe. Christ in anticipating His death upon the Cross regarded it as the time and place of the devil's defeat for He said, "Now shall the prince of the world be cast out" (John 12:31).

But not until on the Mount of Olivet the Lord Jesus Christ comes from Heaven in all His majesty and glory will the final fate of Satan be attested. The sentence pronounced upon him in Eden will then be executed. Through God's permission the traitor-prince still rules the kingdom of Satan but when God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus is carried out fully then God's judgment upon Satan will be executed finally.

### **Subjects in the Two Kingdoms**

From the moment Satan set up a kingdom of his own he has been busy recruiting subjects and mobilizing his forces for warfare. Today he has a multitudinous Satanic host in the aerial heavens, on earth and in the underworld.

Scripture speaks of "the devil and his angels." It tells us there are angels that sinned.

Matthew 25:41, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his*

*angels."*

Jude 6, "*And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.*"

As "prince of the power of the air" and "prince of demons" Satan rules a vast host of spirit beings in the aerial heavens. The "demons" or "evil spirits" who are employed in Satan's service are probably those who were under his rule when he was "the anointed cherub" and who followed him in his rebellion against God. The heavenlies swarm with these spiritual hosts of wickedness which are united in a most complete organization consisting of principalities and powers over which are intelligent world-rulers. The headquarters of this vast organization, Satan's seat, (Revelation 2:13) is above the earth and the sphere of activity of this Satanic host is on the earth and in the atmosphere that envelops it.

Matthew 8:16, R.V., "*And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick.*"

Ephesians 6:12, R.V., "*For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*"

Satan is also ruler over a Satanic order on earth. He is called "the prince of this world." The posterity of Satan's seed is found not only among angels and demons but among men. The seed of the serpent can be traced from Genesis to Revelation. They are men and women who choose to live in self-will rather than in God's will, who refuse God's sovereignty over their lives, who in pride and self-righteousness reject Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Cain is the first one mentioned as the seed of the serpent.

1 John 3:12, "*Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*"

The Lord Jesus recognized the serpent's brood in the self-loving, self-willed, Christ-hating, Christ-rejecting Pharisees of His day and did not hesitate to call them by their rightful names.

Matthew 23:33, "*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*"

On another occasion in speaking to those who rejected Him, He disclosed their spiritual ancestry, the devil, and said they were subjects in His service. "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*"

At still another time Jesus called the unsaved among men "the children of the wicked one." He had told them the parable of the tares and the wheat and they asked for an explanation.

Matthew 13:38, "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but *the tares are the children of the wicked one.*"

God has a multitudinous host in Heaven, in paradise and on earth who are His subjects. The seed of God can be traced from Genesis to Revelation and includes all those who from the beginning of human history have been rescued from Satan's kingdom and removed into God's through faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son. Abel was the first of the heroes of the faith.

Hebrews 11:4, "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.*"

All down through the centuries men continued to offer those "more excellent sacrifices" which required the shedding of blood, thus expressing their need of and faith in the Saviour who was to come.

Then the Saviour came and made one sacrifice for sins through the shedding of His own blood. Since then through the preaching of the Gospel multitudes from out of all nations and peoples of the earth have renounced their citizenship in the kingdom of Satan and have become subjects in the Kingdom of God.

Colossians 1:13, "*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*"

Added to these vast multitudes of God's subjects on earth are the innumerable hosts of angels in Heaven whose delight is in unceasing worship of the Lamb that was slain.

Revelation 5:11-12, "*And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*"

### **Two Systems**

Satan has a purpose, a project and a program. His purpose is to "be like the Most High," his project is to set up a kingdom in opposition to the Kingdom of God, his program is to better the condition of the world and the circumstances of humanity so that men will be satisfied to remain his subjects and will have no desire for the Kingdom of God.

Satan has been represented in much of the literature of the world as the fiend of hell. He has been caricatured as a heinous creature with horns and hoofs, revelling in all that was cruel, vicious and unclean. But he is the exact opposite of all this. He never wanted to be the god of hell but the God of Heaven. It was God's judgment upon his sin that made him king of the bottomless pit. He is the inspirer and instigator of the very highest standards of the God-less, self-made world of mankind. His purpose was and still is to be and to do without God what God is and does. Let us

ever keep in mind that Satan's purpose was to dethrone God in His universe and in the hearts of men and then to take His place. To succeed in his attempt Satan must try not to be unlike God but like God. To incline the hearts of men to himself as a ruler and to draw out their hearts to him in worship he must imitate God. To annul the work of Christ Satan must counterfeit it as far as possible.

His project was in line with his purpose. He would leave his position as a subordinate in God's kingdom and set up a kingdom of his own. The foundation of it would be self. Self-will, self-love, self-interest, self-sufficiency would constitute its corner stone. Lawlessness, a revolt against the rule of God, and irreverence, a refusal to worship God, would be its superstructure.

Satan knew that such a project would have to be safeguarded by a cleverly planned program. Not even the natural man would submit knowingly to the sovereignty of Satan or fall down and worship him. So Satan's program from the beginning has been one of deception. Satan has sought to keep the natural man satisfied with himself and with the world in which he lives. This is not as easy a task as it might seem. The spirit of man can never be satisfied save in God from whom it emanated and for whom it was created. Something in even the worst of men at certain times and under some circumstances cries out for God. Man lives and toils in sweat, suffering and sorrow. His spirit, soul and body cry out for release from the intolerable burden.

In the light of this knowledge Satan framed a very clever program. It was to unite all his subjects into a huge world federation for the reformation and better government of the world. This would be accomplished through carefully worked out plans for the promotion of education, culture, morality and peace upon the earth. Human relationships, international, civic, social, family and personal are undeniably in a terrible tangle but through peace conferences, leagues of nations and world courts international maladjustments would be righted: through mass education movements and social service programs civic and social conditions would be bettered: through new thought processes which foster self-culture and self-constraint the civil war within man's own personality would be ended and so more amicable relations with those to whom he was bound by ties of blood and of friendship would be established. Thus Satan would succeed in deceiving men into thinking the Kingdom of God had come on earth.

Satan knows there is but one true God and that Jesus Christ is His Son whom He sent to be the Saviour (James 2:19; Matthew 8:29). But this truth he would keep men from knowing. He must even keep them from feeling any need for God. So his program must provide for the perfect satisfaction of man's soul and body that his spirit may be kept darkened and deadened. So Satan's program includes every conceivable thing that could minister to self-enjoyment, self-ease, self-gain and self-satisfaction in the realm of the physical, intellectual, affectional, aesthetic, moral, yea even in the religious nature of man.

Moreover his program must provide for man an outward environment that matches this inward need. The earth is cursed but Satan must do what he can to remove the effects of that curse. Man will never be satisfied unless the earth is a more comfortable, pleasant place in which to live. So Satan's plan is to make this world very attractive and then organize human society that it may be so engrossed with its pursuits and pleasures men will have no thought for God.

Earnest, serious-minded men will see through this flimsy veil and will be concerned over the world's maladjustments. But Satan will engage such men in the task of repairing the ruin he himself has wrought. They will give millions upon millions of dollars, some will even lay down their lives in the accomplishment of the task thinking they are engaged in God's service. Satan will drug men with the tangible and transient and so detach them from the heavenly and eternal.

This huge federation of evil spirits and evil men is organized into a cunning system over which Satan is the presiding genius. He determines its principles, directs its policies, decides upon its program and devises its propaganda. This Satanic system is "the world." The Lord Jesus revealed both its name and its nature in His farewell message to His disciples and told them clearly what its attitude to Him would be. The attitude of this system to Jesus Christ, which is one of unmitigated hatred, brands it as Satanic.

John 15:18-19, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*"

John 17:14, 16, "*I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*"

God says that this Satanic system is inherently "evil"; hopelessly "corrupt"; thoroughly "polluted"; irreconcilably hateful.

Galatians 1:4, "*Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.*"

2 Peter 1:4, "*Whereby are given unto us 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 2:20, "*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*"

John 15:18, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*"

Thus God states His estimate of "the world." He speaks with equal clearness regarding its works.

John 7:7, "*The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*"

This satanic system, "the world," is like a colossal octopus that has sent forth myriads of tentacles to lay hold upon every phase of human life and draw it unto itself. It has its grip upon the corporate life of mankind in its homes, marts, schools,

politics, even its churches. It has penetrated into every relationship of the individual's life, personal, family, social, national and international.

"The world," which is human society with God left out, is Satan's snare for capturing men and holding them in bondage. "What the web is to the spider: what the bait is to the angler: what the lure is to the fowler: so is the world to Satan a means of capturing men." "The world " is the devil's paw with which he strikes men: it is his lair into which he entraps men: it is the devil's ally in fighting God for the sovereign control of men.

But is there anything within man that responds to Satan and to his system? In the Bible we read they have an accomplice whose name is "the flesh."

Romans 7:5, "For when *we were in the flesh*, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

Romans 8:12-13, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, *not to the flesh, to live after the flesh*. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

In Scripture the word "flesh" has several meanings but in the verses quoted it is used in the ethical sense and means the whole natural man, spirit, soul and body, living in self-will and alienated from the life of God. The flesh is what man became through the fall. It is man "without God" (Ephesians 2:12).

The "flesh" manifests nothing but antagonism to God and defiance of authority. It is irrevocably opposed to God and to His law.

Romans 8:7, "Because *the carnal mind is enmity against God*: for it is *not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*."

The "flesh" then is the material in mankind upon which Satan works to keep man a part of his system. This trinity of evil, the world, the flesh and the devil, is organized into a diabolical combine against God and His saints.

Satan has a cleverly thought out plan but God has a divinely wrought out purpose. God's purpose antedated Satan's plan: God's purpose anticipated Satan's plan: God's purpose annulled Satan's plan: God's purpose was formed in the eternity of the past and reaches into the eternity of the future. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Christ Jesus was the One through whom God's purpose was to be fulfilled. He constantly spoke of Himself as one who had been sent from Heaven by the Father to do the Father's will, not His own. He did not belong to earth but to Heaven and was here only to fulfil a special mission.

John 6:38, 40, "For *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him at the last day."



Jesus disclaimed any part in or relationship to the Satanic system called "the world."

John 17:16, "They are not of the world, *even as I am not of the world.*"

John 14:30, "For *the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*"

In fact He declared that this Satanic system had an unchangeable attitude toward Him — that of unrelenting hate which would spend itself ultimately in crucifying Him.

John 15:18, "If the world hate you, ye know that *it hated me before it hated you.*"

John 15:20, "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; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.*"

There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that God makes any attempt to change or to convert "the world." The Lord Jesus frankly acknowledges that "the whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John 5:19, R.V.) and is under Satan's control.

God's purpose in Christ is to call men out of the world: to emancipate them from love for it, even to crucify them unto the world and it unto them

John 15:19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because . . . *I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*"

1 John 2:15, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*"

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

God's purpose in this age Scripture makes unmistakably clear to the spiritual mind. It is to call out individuals, here and there, from all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues, who through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross become a very part of Him and He of them. This living organism He calls His body, the Church.

Colossians 1:18, "And *he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*"

Christ's purpose in this age is to call out of the world and into union with Himself those "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," who become a holy, heavenly people fit to be members of the body of which the holy Christ in Heaven is the Head.



Ephesians 1:4, "*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*"

Ephesians 1:22-23, "*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*"

1 Corinthians 12:27, "*Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*"

From God's viewpoint "the world" and "the Church" are exact opposites. "The world" is a vast organization of the whole mass of unbelieving mankind under Satan's leadership. "The Church" is an invisible organism of all true believers under Christ's Headship. These two are in conflict on the earth and are pitted against each other as the instruments of Satan and of Christ in their attempt to get and keep possession and control of men.

How does God win response to His appeal to men to come out of the world and into fellowship with Christ? Does He have an associate in this task? We shall see in succeeding lessons that this is the work of the Holy Spirit who kindles life anew in the human spirit and then comes Himself to dwell in it.

Ezekiel 36:26-27, "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: . . . And I will put my Spirit within you.*"

Romans 8:9, "*But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.*"

### **THE CONSUMMATION OF THE CONFLICT**

God's eternal purpose in man's redemption has been in gradual process of fulfilment ever since it was formed and each succeeding century has brought it nearer to its consummation. The heart of God's plan of redemption was a Saviour. This Saviour was to come through the seed of a woman. God was to become man. So God chose a people and set them apart that through them the Saviour might come "according to the flesh." In the fulness of time Christ came, lived, died and rose again. Man's redemption was accomplished.

Romans 9:4-5, "*Who are Israelites; . . . Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.*"

Following thereon a written Word was needed to proclaim this wondrous Gospel to sinners everywhere. So God chose and set apart a people through whom the written Word might come.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "*I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; And*

that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the scriptures.*"

Romans 3:1-2, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way: *chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*"

Through the Israelites, God's chosen people, He gave both the incarnate Word and the written Word to the world.

God's next move was to preach this Gospel through His own ministers and missionaries throughout the whole world that all men everywhere might have the opportunity to behold the Son and to believe on Him.

Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*"

When this work has been completed to God's satisfaction and the Bride is made ready for the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ will come again to take His own unto Himself and to set up His kingdom upon earth.

This is the beginning of the end for Satan. He will be bound, cast into the bottomless pit for one thousand years. Then he will be loosed for a little season. He will go forth to deceive the nations and to gather them together for battle against the Lord, thus proving his unchanging and unchangeable attitude of self-will and of opposition to God (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-9).

Then comes God's final and full judgment upon him. He is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).

Christ Jesus having consummated to the full God's plan to redeem men and reconcile all things unto Himself now restores the absolute, undivided sovereignty of God over His entire universe.

1 Corinthians 15:24-25, 28, "Then cometh the end, *when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son, also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*"

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

## Chapter Six

### False and Futile Attempts For Salvation

In His Word God has taught one truth which is beyond all contradiction. It is that sin has created an awful chasm between Himself and man. Man may ignore or condone sin, he may treat it very lightly, he may even be so foolish as to deny its reality, but

that does not alter the unalterable fact that sin exists and that it separates from God. God does not treat sin lightly. God hates it, God condemns it. "Sin unatoned for must be an insuperable barrier between the sinner and God."

If the natural man is to be brought into favour and fellowship with God, it is evident that something must be done with sin. Man's first step in returning to God must be a consciousness that deepens into a conviction of sin. So the question which comes to every person who awakens to his condition through sin and its consequences, is the same as that which came to the Philippian jailor, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

### **THE NATURE OF SALVATION**

Let us analyse the jailor's question. First, "What must *I* do to be saved?" Who is the "I"? A lost man enslaved by sin, self and Satan; a blind man, whose mind has been darkened by the god of this world and whose eyes are closed to the beauty and glory of God; a dead man alienated from the life of God.

Second, "What must I do to be *saved*?" He does not ask what he must do to be reformed or repaired or repolished, but to be saved. The question he asks is, "How can I, an enslaved man, have deliverance; a blind man have sight; a dead man have life?"

Third, "What must I *do* to be saved?" What can a bondsman do to free himself? Or what can a blind man do to gain sight? Or what can a dead man do to make himself alive?

Let us answer the jailor's question by defining the kind of salvation which will fully meet the sinner's need. *It must be a salvation God can accept as wholly sufficient and satisfactory.* God is the One who has been offended and most wounded by sin. By his sin Adam forfeited all right to relationship with God and it is God alone who can say by what means and in what manner the relationship with sinful men can be restored. Man has no ground upon which he can approach God. If God ever receives the natural man it must be upon some ground where he confesses him-self an helpless, hopeless, sinner. "Between him and God is the impassable gulf of moral inability. Between him and God is the barrier of penal judgment." God alone can determine how this chasm shall be bridged and this barrier removed.

*It must be a salvation that deals effectually with sin and all its consequences.* This salvation must put away sin and give man a new nature, without which there would be no basis for establishing a relationship with God. This salvation must blot out man's sins and their attendant guilt. Sins committed cannot be un-done merely by an expression of sorrow or by a promise of amendment through a New Year resolution or by the turning over of a new leaf.

*It must be a salvation that carries out the sentence of death upon the sinner.* God's law is holy and it cannot be trifled with. God's judgments are righteous and they must be fulfilled. God has said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The penalty must

be paid; the judgment must be executed. Any salvation that saves must take into account the payment of this penalty and the execution of this judgment.

*It must be a salvation that accomplishes the defeat, dethronement and destruction of Satan.* God's judgment upon Satan who brought sin into the universe must be executed as truly as God's judgment upon the sinner. God has said that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. This is one half of the original promise of salvation. Christ's final victory necessitates Satan's full defeat. Such must be the nature of any salvation that fully saves.

### **MAN'S FALSE AND FUTILE ATTEMPTS FOR SALVATION**

But there are those who, refusing to accept God's estimate of the natural man, deny the necessity of any such radical and revolutionary change in him. They delight in the exaltation of the flesh and they deny the self evident fact that human nature is in utter ruin though they are compelled to admit that it is greatly in need of repair. They believe and teach that human nature is imperfect because it is in the process of formation. But given proper environment, liberal education and the chance to make the best of what he already possesses, man by his own natural development ultimately will achieve Godlikeness and attain a place in the Kingdom of God. In other words salvation is not by grace but by growth; it depends upon an evolution of life from within rather than upon an impartation of life from without.

There are those even in the pulpit and in the theological seminary who teach that the natural man is not dead but diseased; not wicked but weak; not fallen but fainting; and they attempt resuscitation through ethical culture, social reform and mass education while ridiculing the necessity of redemption through the atoning work of the crucified Saviour and regeneration through the power of the indwelling Spirit.

Their kind of preaching is well summed up in the word of a prominent preacher who said, "Do your part and God will surely do His. To deny that a man is forgiven when he turns away from wrong and asks forgiveness would be to deny the moral character of God." In such teaching man is made his own saviour, and salvation is nothing more than a feeble sense of regret resulting in slight changes in conduct to which God is asked to affix His seal of forgiveness.

This kind of thinking and teaching leads men to seek out ways of salvation which are futile and to rest upon hopes which are false. If the meaning of salvation is what we have indicated in these pages then the means of its accomplishment must be supernatural. But man is ever prone to put his trust in the purely natural, in himself.

When the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened to evil and they came into a realization of their sin and shame instead of seeking God, confessing their sin, and acknowledging their undone condition, they made themselves aprons of fig leaves to cover their naked-ness (Genesis 3:7). From that day to this the natural man has been at the same foolish, futile task of trying to cover his sin and guilt with some garment of his own making which he trusts will be acceptable to God.

But no dress which the natural man provides for the flesh will ever please God. No matter of what material it is made or how beautiful, fitting and durable it may seem to be to the world, it will wither into nothingness, even as Adam's and Eve's aprons of fig leaves, before the righteousness and holiness of God.

No garment of salvation except the one He Himself provides will be acceptable to God.

Genesis 3:21, "Unto Adam also and to his wife *did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*"

By this act God acknowledged that the shame of Adam and Eve was not groundless, and that they did need a covering; but He also showed the utter inadequacy of the one they had provided for themselves, their lack of apprehension of the enormity and heinousness of their sin against Him, and of the nature of the salvation required to restore them to His fellowship.

God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." They had eaten. "The wages of sin is death." If they did not die some one acceptable to God must die in their stead. This is the meaning of salvation. But God had already given the promise of a Saviour-Substitute. The seed of the serpent would *bruise* the heel of the woman's seed. The garments of skin with which the Lord God clothed Adam and Eve were procured through the slaying of animals, through the shedding of blood. By this gracious act of God the means of salvation was symbolized; the death of His own well-beloved Son was shadowed forth. God Himself furnished the skins, God made the coats, God clothed them in acceptable garments.

Now let us look at some of the aprons of fig leaves with which the natural man is trying to make himself acceptable to God and fit for Heaven.

### **Salvation Through Character**

"Character — homebrew" is the sign over the door of the self-righteous man's life. He has to admit weakness and failure but he does not call sin nor does he grant that he has any great need. There is nothing in him so wrong that he cannot remedy it himself if given time, a proper environment and enlarged opportunities. The self-righteous man thinks that he starts with something already very good, something even with the very essence of the divine in it. His business is to make this good thing gradually better.

In this process of self-cultivation the self-righteous man measures himself with himself and he is very pleased; he measures himself also with other men and, like the self-righteous Pharisee of Luke 18:9-14, he is more than pleased. He congratulates himself on himself and even commends his virtues to God. But there is one measurement that he has forgotten to take. He has never placed his self-righteous life alongside the spotless, stainless, sinless, life of the Son of Man to see how infinitely far short he falls of a righteousness which God accepts. He ignores the fact that the absolute righteousness of God demands nothing less than absolute righteousness in all who are acceptable to Him, which is a demand no human being in himself ever can meet.

Someday when this man stands before the Lord Jesus Christ, once a proffered but a rejected Saviour, now his Judge, he will expect Him to approve this manmade production of righteousness, to pronounce it as good as anything the Lord could have done, and to let him pass into Heaven to abide forever in the presence of an absolutely righteous God.

I was talking once with a friend concerning his need of a Saviour. He was a man of splendid ideals, high standards and excellent principles. He was cultured, kind, moral, and from a human standpoint, lived what the world would commend as a highly respectable life. When I pressed the necessity of accepting Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he said, "Why do I need anyone to die for me? I do not want any one's blood shed for me!" The root of that reply was self-righteousness. That young man was trusting to be saved through character. God looks down upon all such "which trusted in themselves that they were righteous" and says,

Romans 3:10, 12, "There is *none righteous*, no, not one. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is *none that doeth good, no, not one.*"

And of the righteousness which has been so carefully cultivated He gives His estimate through the mouth of His prophet,

Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and *all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*; and we do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

To rely upon self-righteousness as the ground of salvation is utterly futile. God declares plainly that His wrath against it will be revealed.

Romans 10:3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Romans 1:18, "For *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

How very different is the self-righteous, self-made man from the one who has had a glimpse of the Holy One and His righteousness!

Isaiah 6:5, "Then said I, Woe is me! for *I am undone*; because I am *a man of unclean lips*, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Job 42:5-6, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes."

1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: *of whom I am chief.*"

The last quotation is from the lips of a man who, if any one, could have rested upon his own righteousness as a sufficient ground of acceptance with God. With perfect sincerity he said of himself that "touching the righteousness which is of the law" he was "blameless." Yet after seeing the Lord of glory he was convinced of the foolishness and futility of such confidence in the flesh. From that time he had but one consuming desire, "that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:6, 9). The only righteousness that makes any man acceptable with God is the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:22-23, "*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*"

No one whose eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts, and who has contrasted his own sinfulness with His holiness will have a shred of hope of acceptance with God through his own character. The man who relies upon any righteousness in himself as his ground of salvation and who refuses Christ's imputed righteousness as God's free gift only proves the Word of God that the god of this world has blinded his mind so that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine into his heart.

### **Salvation Through Education**

Another bridge which men attempt to erect over the yawning sin-made chasm between God and man is that of education. Ignorance due to lack of opportunity is deemed the cause of much of the sorrow, suffering and strife, in the world. The cry is, "Give every one an education and so elevate standards, raise ideals and change environment. By thus creating a desire for better conditions of life a better life itself will eventuate." There are intelligent men and women today who are proclaiming that the one thing needed for the salvation of individuals and of nations is mass education. Knowledge is made the cure for sin.

Such argument is absolute fallacy. For *to know* is but a fragment of man's responsibility in the matter of living and is by far the easier part of the task. Life challenges us *to do*, above all *to be*. Knowledge is of no value whatsoever until it has been transmuted into character and conduct. In fact the Bible tells us in one of its most solemn words that unless it is so transmuted knowledge becomes positive sin. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Education has sometimes even led to a deterioration of character and conduct. It has opened new avenue sin to Sin and taught men greater cleverness in the ways of evil. It has not only made men more selfish, more proud, more grasping, but has placed them in positions where their selfishness, ambition and greed could have full right-of-way against others less favoured.

We hear much in certain circles today about religious education and many people believe this to be the sufficient remedy for the need of the world. If religious education means teaching the Word of God itself under the direction and operation of the divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit, with the purpose of securing man's regeneration and renewal, then it is indeed one of the world's greatest and deepest needs. But, if it means urging the natural man to study Christ's teachings and to learn His



principles of life for men as individuals and as members of society in order that through obedience to His teaching, through application of His principles, and through imitation of His example there may be a reconstruction of human society and an amelioration of social wrongs, then it is an absolutely foolish and futile thing. The natural man could know the content of the teachings of God from Genesis to Revelation and still have no power, and more, no desire to obey them. He might be thoroughly conversant with every Christian principle for the government of man in his personal, social and civic relationships and yet fail to apply them in his own life.

I heard of a group of students who talked loud and long about the selfishness and greed of officials in high places in the government of their country. They took part in patriotic movements to remove these men from office. Yet they themselves were found guilty of taking a "squeeze" from their fellow-students who had entrusted to them the task of buying food under a self-government scheme in operation in the college. In their smaller sphere of activity they had done exactly what the officials had done in their larger sphere. Any system of religious education which merely unfolds to the natural man the teachings and principles of Jesus Christ and tells how to apply them in the life of the other fellow is utterly inadequate. The Bible is the only textbook given man on salvation from sin and from cover to cover there is not a ray of hope held out of salvation through education or through anything that aims merely at the improvement of the natural man. In fact God plainly tells us in the first and second chapters of 1 Corinthians that it is "the wisdom" of the natural man that keeps him from accepting the only way of salvation, Christ crucified. Education, if it be truly Christian, may be one of the agents used by God to create the desire for salvation but it can never furnish the dynamic which makes salvation possible.

### **Salvation Through Works**

One man looks for salvation through character or what he is; another trusts in education or what he *knows*; while a third seeks it in service or what he *does*. He believes he can be saved through good works. He comes to God with self-confidence and says, "What shall I do that I might work the works of God?"

God answers his question by asking one which teaches that the natural man can do no good work that will accomplish his salvation.

Jeremiah 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*"

Please note God does not say, "Can the Ethiopian powder or rouge his skin?" That has been done. The question is "Can the Ethiopian *change* his skin?" The natural inference is that it would be changed from its natural colour to another. Can that be done?

Suppose a girl from Ethiopia comes for the first time into the presence of a group of fair skinned girls. Never before has she seen any colour of skin but black. She wishes her skin to be fair and determines to do something to make it so. Procuring water and soap she proceeds to lather her face and rubs it vigorously. The process ended she goes triumphantly to the mirror expecting to see a great change. Instead she confronts the same black skin only a bit more highly polished. She decides that she did not do enough, that she failed to use sufficient water or soap or muscle, so she repeats the process increasing the use of soap, water and strength. But the second



attempt ends in the same bitter disappointment. To *change* her skin is beyond her power.

"*Can* the Ethiopian change his skin?" We are compelled to answer God's question for His answer to ours depends upon it. *If* the Ethiopian *can* change his skin then the natural man will be able to *do* something to change his sinful heart, he will be able to do good who has always been accustomed to do evil. But, if the Ethiopian cannot change his skin then what must we infer regarding the power of the natural man to change his evil heart? God's Word gives a conclusive answer.

Jeremiah 2:22, "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet *thine iniquity is marked before me*, saith the Lord God."

Through self-cultivation, self-discipline and self-effort many men and women have been able to accomplish certain reforms within themselves which have made them more acceptable to themselves and to the world but no living person has ever been able to make himself righteous, and without righteousness no man is acceptable to God.

Another way in which the natural man attempts his own salvation is to do something *for* God which will be acceptable.

This was Cain's mistake, yea, it was more, it was Cain's sin. Why was Abel's offering accepted and Cain's accepted not? (Genesis 4:4, 5). Because Abel realized that he was a sinner and that the offering he brought to God must confess that fact and be an acknowledgment of his need of another to cleanse him. Cain, on the contrary, brought an offering which revealed no sense of sin but rather of complete self-sufficiency. He offered *his* best, the work of *his* hands, the fruitage of *his* toil. He needed not the help of any one. And he expected God to accept his gift, the offering of a sinner still in his sins, and to call the account against him squared. Cain did not come to God "by faith" (Heb. 11:4) but "by works."

There is no phase of modern teaching more ancient or pagan than the doctrine proclaimed so generally throughout the world today that we can be made acceptable to God by good works, that we are saved through service. It is indeed true that, if we are saved, we will serve; but it is altogether untrue that we are saved because we serve.

Jews in our Lord's time who were unwilling to acknowledge Him as their Messiah and to accept Him as their Saviour, came to Him with the question, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" The reply of the Lord Jesus is very significant. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." But this "good work" they stubbornly refused "to do."

What God required was not that they should do something for Him but that they should accept what He had done for them. The foundation stone of salvation is not what man gives to God but what God gives to man; it is not what man offers to God but what he receives from God.

Romans 4:4-5, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him* that

justifieth the ungodly, *his faith is counted for righteousness.*"

2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

The Pharisees considered themselves the prophets of religion. They fasted and prayed; they paid tithes and "built the tombs of the prophets and garnished the sepulchers of the righteous." They did countless good works yet Jesus called them "hypocrites" and the apostle Paul prayed that they might be "saved." So in this twentieth century many are deceived into thinking they are saved because they serve tables at a church supper; make garments for the poor or band-aids for the sick; act as chairman of the finance committee to put over a big drive; or contrive schemes for the physical and social betterment of mankind.

Salvation through good works either for God or man is pure paganism. I have a friend in China whose dear old grandmother was an ardent Buddhist. At seventy-six years of age she rose every morning at four o'clock and spent the hours until noon without food in performing the rites of her heathen worship. She walked long distances to the temple, she burned her bundles of incense and lighted her candles, she gave of her money. Her days were largely spent in religious works, but at seventy-six she was still an ignorant, superstitious, idolatrous, unsaved woman. But not one whit more unsaved than the man or woman, even though dressed in cap and gown, who offers to the Saviour who died upon the Cross to redeem him "the stone" of philanthropy, good works and social service, for "the bread" of faith, adoration and worship.

### **Salvation Through Religion**

Some one has said, "Man is incurably religious." Another has beautifully written, "God created man a deep and everlasting void. The soul in its highest sense is a vast capacity for God but emptiness without God." It is most assuredly true that man was made for God and his heart never can be fully satisfied until it is satisfied in Him. It is equally true that God made man not only in His likeness but also with the capacity for fellowship with Him, yes, even for sonship. Therefore God's heart can never be fully satisfied except as this relationship with man is realized and enjoyed.

The natural man can neither satisfy nor please God (Romans 8:7). Therefore God could never enjoy his presence even were it possible for him to stay in the presence of an holy God. Something must be done by God to make man acceptable to Him.

From the day sin entered into the human race, God has been working to win men and women, one by one, back to Himself. He has sent His messengers, prophets and apostles to open the eyes of sinners and "to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." At the same time the devil has been equally busy blinding the minds of men "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Satan's path is not altogether smooth. Two forces are working against him. One is the religious instinct in man. He cries out for something he knows he needs. He senses his insufficiency in seasons of trial, suffering and sorrow; often his heart reaches out for the help and comfort of one stronger than himself. He cannot let

loved ones pass out of sight and touch without an insistent longing to know where they have gone and if all is well. That unsatisfied something in man's soul that cries out to an unknown God is very much against Satan.

The second hindrance to the devil is the Holy Spirit. It is His business to convict of sin, to reveal the love of God in Christ, and to draw the heart of the sinner out in faith and love to God.

Just here the devil reveals himself at his worst. He will lay siege to that unquenchable thing in man's nature which craves an object of worship and hold it for himself. He will delude men into thinking they can be saved by systems of religion which he inspires them to make.

Contrary to the salvation of which Jesus Christ is the source Satan's system is not one and the same for all men alike irrespective of family, race, education, privilege or environment. These man-made, Satan-inspired religions have various names and manifold methods each suited to the type and temperament of the man who believes them. There is one kind for the ignorant and illiterate; another for the educated and erudite; one for the simple and superstitious; another for the wise and cultured; one for the poor; another for the prosperous.

There is a system of religion for the idolater. Satan is an arch-deceiver and his practice of deception is seen in its most cruel and malicious form in idol worship. Even in this twentieth century Satan still holds in his power millions upon millions of men who are worshippers of gods of their own making. They have been led to believe a lie and so have been plunged into dense darkness.

There is a system of religion for the ritualist. In carrying out His eternal purpose in Christ, God called forth a people from among the nations through whom the seed of the woman would come. The Jews were set apart as the people of God by the rite of circumcision. To this God added the covenants and the law so that the worship and service of the Jew was based on a God-appointed, God-honouring, ritualism. Through the manifold ordinances and sacrifices of the Jewish ritualism God made the Jew familiar with the idea of redemption. Then God raised up prophets who foretold the coming of a Messiah who would be their Redeemer. In the fulness of time the Saviour was born. The need of sacrifices was past for the one Sacrifice had offered Himself.

But the expounders of the law, the most ardent religionists of Jesus' day instead of receiving Him rejected Him. And why? Because they permitted religious ordinances to take a larger place in their lives than God's redemptive order. They exalted ritualism above righteousness and substituted prayer for penitence, tithing for trust and fasting for faith.

There are other great religious systems in the world today in which the real Christ of the Bible, the Redeemer of the Gospels, is veiled through ordinances and ceremonies in which there is no saving power, yet through which countless thousands are deceived into thinking they are made acceptable to God.

There is a system of religion for the rationalist. The pronouncement of the curse upon Satan and the promise of salvation through Christ following the fall precipitated

a conflict as we have seen. The conflict begun then has never ceased; it is being waged more fiercely today than ever before.

To prevent the execution of the curse and the fulfilment of the promise Satan tried in every conceivable way to destroy the seed of the woman. At the Cross of Calvary he thought himself triumphant. But the very place of his supposed victory was the place of his judgment and the forerunner of his final doom. Christ arose, the Victim became the Victor. Christ Jesus returned to the glory from whence He came. He went beyond the devil's reach. There is no way in which Satan again can touch or tempt the person of the adorable Lord. How then would he continue he conflict? Now that he could not focus the venom of his hate upon the incarnate Word upon what would he focus it?

The revelation of this conflict is unfolded in a Book. The incarnate Word has gone home to His Father but the written Word is still on earth. In it the defeat of the devil and the victory of the Christ is recorded in large type. The way of salvation through the atoning death and the triumphant resurrection of the Lord of glory is written in red letters from Genesis to Revelation. *This is the Gospel*. This Gospel the devil hates with all the hatred of which the father of hate is capable. So against it he will now direct his attack. Around the Gospel of Christ the conflict will center henceforth.

The Gospel is in the Bible and the Bible is in the world. It has been printed in hundreds of languages and has gone to the far corners of the earth. More millions of copies of it are being sold annually than of any other book. Men everywhere are reading the Bible and are believing the Gospel. Being saved through it they are taken from Satan's dominion and removed out of his kingdom.

What can he do to stop its progress and its power? Destroy it? He has tried that and failed. The Bible is not printed on paper only but it has been graven on human hearts by the Spirit of God, so that if every copy of the printed Bible in the world today were destroyed a new copy could be made from its truth stored in human hearts.

Perhaps, then, Satan could ridicule the Bible and hinder its progress and power through scoffing. He has tried that also and failed. He has used some of the world's most brilliant men as his preachers of infidelity and atheism. Today they are in their graves and their words are forgotten while the Bible lives on more powerful than ever.

But is there not a more effectual way of denying the Gospel and of keeping sinners from the benefit and blessing of the salvation it offers? There is and Satan is making use of it in these days in ever increasing measure. God tells us that the devil's most subtle manoeuvre in the conflict is to turn preacher and with the Bible as his textbook to concoct out of it a gospel of his own. When Satan found that attacking the written Word from without failed then he began attacking it from within. As Christ uses men to preach His Gospel so Satan would find men who would consent to become "his ministers."

2 Corinthians 11:13-15, R.V., "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; *for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light*. It is no great thing therefore if *his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of*

*righteousness; whose end shall be according to their work."*

What would Satan's gospel be and where would it begin? God's Gospel is a Gospel of grace and begins with Genesis, chapters 1-3. But how could Satan accept these three chapters as they stand fresh from the heart and hand of God containing as they do the revelation of God's perfect work in the creation of the universe and man; the invasion of an enemy, he being that enemy; the injection of sin into God's perfect work; the awful consequence in the fall of Adam and Eve; the terrible curse of God upon himself, upon man and upon the earth; the precious promise of a Saviour and the glorious prophecy of his own defeat through the death upon the Cross? Of course he could not accept these chapters for in them is the germ of the whole Gospel of man's salvation.

He would defeat his own purpose if he did so bold and blatant a thing as deliberately to cut these chapters out of the Bible. But the arch-deceiver is quite equal to the emergency. He will preach a gospel that reserves the right of interpretation of the Word of God according to the dictates of reason. He will insist upon a faith that is rational.

It is always difficult for reason to accept anything beyond its own range. God thinks and works on the plane of uncreated, divine, unlimited, supernatural life. Man thinks and works on the plane of created, human, limited, natural life. The rationalist refuses to recognize any such dividing line between himself and his Creator. Consequently he refuses to accept anything, even from God, that goes beyond his reason. So whatever the rationalist believes, his religion must be on his own plane of life — the natural.

So a system of religion is framed to suit him. A gospel is manufactured "which is another gospel" (Galatians. 1:6), a clever, malicious counterfeit. Satan knows that he must inspire man to make a religion which does away altogether with God's revelation of the creation and the fall of man, otherwise how can he dispose of the promise of a Saviour and the prophecy of his own ultimate defeat through Christ's glorious victory on Calvary and His triumphant return as King?

Consequently the basic tenet of the rationalist's system of religion is evolution. Man did not come direct from God's hands — a perfect work which God Himself pronounced "very good." God's first man was not created in the image of One infinitely higher than himself, but was evolved from something infinitely lower than himself. This something had evolved through various stages by natural processes until man was produced. So that God's part in the production of man was not so much that of a Creator as of a semi-divine supervisor or foreman "of resident natural forces." In other words *the supernatural* in man's creation was eliminated through evolution. So much for man's creation in this man-made, Satan-inspired gospel.

How does this gospel of the rationalist deal with sin? Sin is in the world. Sin is in man. How does the rationalist account for its origin and what does he say of its end? He evades the issue altogether by calmly denying the necessity of any one having such knowledge.

I read recently a chapter on "Sin and its Forgiveness " from the pen of a noted preacher in which he said, "Whence did sin come? What was its origin? How did it get into God's universe? That is a question to which no satisfactory answer has ever yet been given. . . Jesus is disappointing in His treatment of human sin. The origin of evil He never touched. He left that problem as opaque as it was before He came. He seemed to take it for granted that the origin of evil is a problem to be thought about and worked out in some other world than this. . . It is not necessary for us to know either the beginning of evil or the end of it; it is enough to know that sin is a burden to the heart of God, and that God has provided a way for our deliverance." Such deliberate evasion is equivalent to out-and-out denial. For any honest man, whose mind has not been blinded by the god of this world, could not but believe from the reading of Genesis three and Romans five that sin came into this world through Adam who yielded to the will of Satan. Therefore sin must have had its origin in the devil. Jesus, far from leaving this opaque, threw a flood of light upon it when He said that the devil was "a murderer *from the beginning*. . . he is a liar, and the *father of it*" (John 8:44).

But not only is sin in the world but Christ is also in the world. And He is in the world primarily as a Saviour. He became a Saviour by going to the Cross. His work in this world as Saviour is to draw sinners unto Him for salvation. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." His power of attraction is mighty and permeates the world of humanity today. When once the Lord Jesus Christ is accepted by one as Saviour, yielded to as Lord, and appropriated as Life, then the devil's power over that life is broken. The devil knows this full well. So what will he do with Christ in the system of religion he inspires men to make, and in the gospel he inspires them to preach?

Satan cannot do away with Christ altogether for even the most simple would see that any system of religion which claims to be based on the Bible and calls itself Christianity must give Christ some place. It is a galling thing to do but the devil is compelled for policy's sake to preach Christ in his "gospel, which is another gospel." But will he allow "his ministers of righteousness" to preach Jesus Christ as the Saviour from the guilt, penalty and power of sin through His substitutionary death upon the Cross and His bodily resurrection and His ascension into Heaven as the God-man, the interceding High Priest? Never! To do so would be allowing his own funeral sermon to be preached, fulfilling Genesis 3:15. But he will preach Jesus as the world's greatest teacher, its purest example, its most ethical leader, its most powerful reformer. He will appeal to the natural man still in his sin and hostility, still under condemnation and the sentence of death, to obey Christ's teaching, emulate His example, follow His leadership and submit to His reforms. Such a caricature of the real Christ as this is found in the rationalist's system of religion.

True Christianity is grounded upon the supernatural. Two *supernatural facts* are its foundation. The first is the supernatural creation of man by the divine Creator whose perfect work was ruined by an enemy through the injection of sin. The second is the supernatural regeneration of man accomplished by God's grace through the supernatural birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of His Son.

Rationalism, liberalism, modernism or whatever one wishes to call it, is grounded upon the natural. Two *fallacies* are its foundation. The first is the fashioning of man through evolution by which natural process he will continue to grow from the imperfect to the perfect. The second is the natural reformation of man accomplished



through self-development by the help of a human Jesus, whose earthly life furnishes an example to be imitated, whose teachings provide a rule for right living, and whose principles constitute a guide for the overcoming of evil and the gradual betterment of individual and corporate life.

There is, then, a system of religion made by man but inspired by Satan. It is a religion which eliminates the supernatural. I am speaking now of the system not of the man who accepts it: of modernism not of the modernist. There are varying degrees and grades of faith and of unbelief in those who subscribe to this false system of religion. Some who call themselves modernists were brought up and nourished on the fundamental truths of evangelical Christianity and there is now in their belief a strange mixture of the false and the true. Our purpose in writing this is not to budge any man but to warn any who may be putting confidence for salvation in this manmade, Satan-inspired system of religion.

There is a gospel of Satan and a Gospel of Christ; the one is the exact antithesis of the other. Satan's gospel has no place for the grace of God. Satan's gospel reverses God's estimate of the natural man. It does not admit that in himself he is hopelessly incurable and incorrigible, even though it does have to say that he is still imperfect. The basic tenet of his gospel is man's natural worthiness which can be increased and for which man will take to himself the glory. Satan's gospel admits the natural man's need for spiritual garments, but it teaches men that these garments can be made by themselves and urges them to borrow the pattern from the earthly life of Jesus and then make the garments to fit themselves. In Satan's gospel the sinner does not penitently beseech God to save him but he politely requests God to help him save himself and then endorse what he has done.

The Gospel of Christ has place for nothing but the grace of God by which a salvation is provided that the sinner accepts by faith as a gift. God's Gospel declares that the natural man is a sinner, a rebel and an outlaw and that he is separated from God and condemned by God. In God's Gospel the sinner admits that this is his standing and his state before God and that he is absolutely helpless to change it and therefore hopeless. He comes to God in true penitence and cries to God for salvation. The basic tenet of God's Gospel is the infinite worth of His Son and the worthiness of his finished work of redemption. God's Gospel declares the spiritual nakedness of the natural man and his inability to stand in the presence of God unless clothed in the garment of His Son's righteousness which He will graciously bestow upon all who will accept Him by faith.

Which Gospel are you believing? There is but one Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation. Anything which departs an iota from the truth of that Gospel is "another gospel," even the gospel of Satan.

Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of *the gospel of Christ*: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

Galatians 1:6-9, " I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ *unto another gospel*: Which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and *would pervert the gospel of Christ*. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach *any other gospel* unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*. As we said before, so say I now again, *If any man preach any other gospel*

*unto you than ye have received, let him be accursed."*

We have been facing the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and endeavouring to answer it. I trust it has been made clear that salvation does not consist in anything that man makes of himself or that education and environment make of him. Nor does it consist in anything that he does either for God or for man. Neither is salvation a mere matter of a changed manner of living. It does not mean the elevation of the life of the natural man to a better state of living still on the natural plane. As long as he remains on the plane of the natural he is unsaved, no matter how cultured, educated, moral or even religious he is.

Salvation is not man's work for God but God's work for man. Salvation calls us to put our faith not in what man is or does but in what Christ is and has done. Salvation's first concern is not what kind of a life a man lives but what is his relationship to God. So its first dealing is not with the good in man but with the bad. Salvation does not try to improve the standing and state of the natural man through reformation but it transfers him into a totally new sphere of life through regeneration.

Every attempt to save the natural man through character, education, good works or religion, will prove utterly futile because it has failed to deal effectually with that trinity of evil, sin, self and Satan. Anything that leaves a man "in Adam," "in the flesh," and under "the power of Satan" is not salvation and is not acceptable to God. Dear reader, which way are you going to take?

Will you proudly and arrogantly try to save yourself or will you humbly and penitently accept the salvation provided for you in Another? Will you go the way of Cain, who presented to God as a sacrifice the finest fruit of his garden and the best product of his toil, or will you go the way of Abel who acknowledged his need of a Saviour, and accepted by faith God's sacrifice?

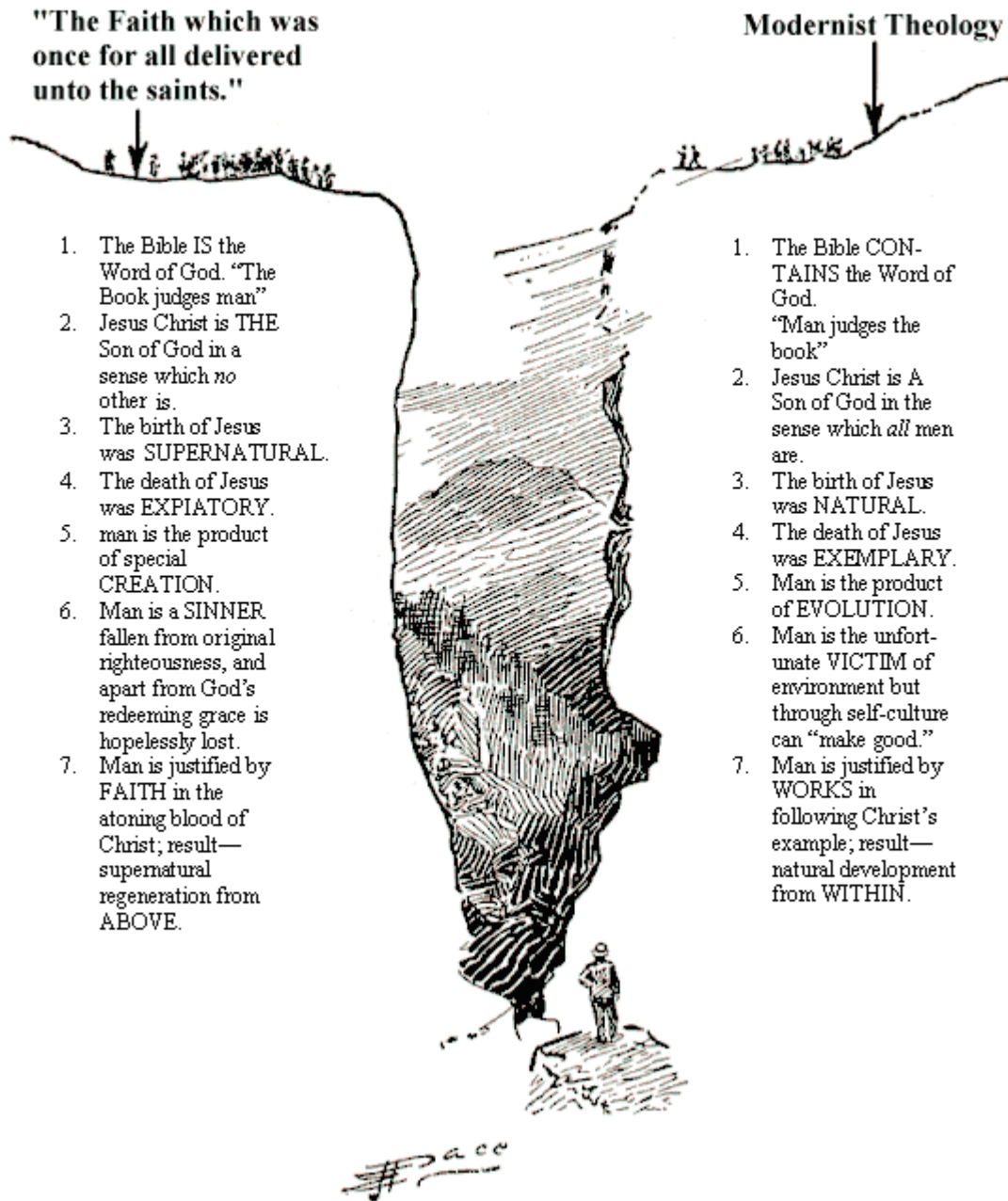
Will you attempt to secure access to and acceptability with God on the ground of good works or will you rest on the finished work of God's Son?

Will you try to improve the old sinful nature which is your inheritance in Adam or will you partake by faith of that new divine nature which God bestows in Christ? Will you try to conform your character and conduct to the standards of Satan's worldly system or will you yield yourself to Christ to be transformed into His image through the infilling of the Holy Spirit?

Will you follow Satan's way or God's? Upon your answer to this question your present happiness and your eternal destiny depend.



## NO MIDDLE GROUND -- ONLY A CHASM



Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

### Chapter Seven The Chasm Bridged

God and God's first man enjoyed sweet and intimate communion until they were separated by sin. How could this great, impassable chasm which sin had made

between God and man be bridged? From the very nature of the case man could do nothing, even had he wanted to, for sin had closed all possible access to God. Clearly, if anything was to be done, God would have to do it.

But what would God do? Adam's sin presented a terrific problem: one which not only affected God's personal relationship to man but His governmental relationship to the whole universe; nay, even, it affected His own personal character.

Adam's sin was spiritual anarchy; it was resistance to God's authority; disobedience to God's command; rebellion against God's law. How would God treat sin? Would He punish it and pass judgment upon it? Or would He condone it and pass over it? If God failed to deal righteously with such a flagrant case of disobedience and disloyalty, how could He maintain order through obedience to law in any other part of His universe? God's governmental administration of the universe was involved in this stupendous difficulty.

But Adam's rebellion created an even greater problem than this. By it God's holiness had been outraged; His righteousness denied; His veracity questioned; His goodness doubted; His Word disbelieved; His command disobeyed; His love spurned. Surely such treatment deserved drastic action. Why did He not then and there abandon Adam and Eve utterly and leave them and their posterity to the consequences of their sin?

He did not because He could not. "God is love," and "love never faileth." God's love is an everlasting love which nothing can quench, not even sin. Awful, terrible as sin is, it is not powerful enough to defeat God's purpose in the creation of man. Man was created not only *by* God but *for* God. Man was made for fellowship with God, much more, for ultimate sonship. Apart from a living, loving relationship with man God could never be satisfied. God, who is love, could not cast away the sinner in his sin and still be love. The claims of God's love must be met.

But "God is light" and "in him is no darkness at all." As light cannot fellowship with darkness, so holiness cannot commune with sin. An holy God cannot have intimate relationship with a sinful man. God and sin cannot dwell together. The claims of God's holiness must be satisfied as truly as the claims of His love.

"We speak of law and love, of truth and grace, of justice and mercy, and so long as sin does not exist, where is no controversy between any of these. If there be no sin, law and love are never out of harmony with each other; truth and grace go ever hand in hand; justice and mercy sing a common anthem. If the law be broken, what is love to do? If truth be violated, how can grace operate? In the presence of crime, how can justice and mercy meet? This is the problem of problems. It is not a problem as between God and man. It is not a problem as between God and angels. It is a problem as between God and Himself" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Bible and the Cross*, p. 125).

Let us think deeply into this greatest of problems created by Adam's sin. How would He satisfy the claims of both His love and His holiness? His holiness must condemn sin and command the sinner to depart. His love must open its arms to the sinner and bid him come. An holy God could not tolerate sin, a loving God could not turn away from the sinner. God could not desert the sinner but what should He do with the sin?

God's attitude toward sin would reveal His true character quite as much as His attitude toward the sinner.

Would Adam's sin not only separate God and man but would it even bring division into God's own being? "Sin, whether as anticipated by the Creator, or as become actual in our world, created an antinomy in the very being of God, created a new ethical exigency for God and for the universe, so that for the legitimate expression of either or both of these polarities (holiness and love) in question a new reconciliation was necessary: that is, a reconciliation of opposite moral relationships within God's being itself. On the one hand, as we must believe, the self-affirmatory character of the divine purity must compel displeasure against sin: and on the other hand, the divine clemency which on God's part yearns to impart its own holy nature to His creatures would constrain Him to forgive and cleanse from that sin" (H. C. Mabie, *The Divine Reason of the Cross*, p. 54).

What, then, would God do that both would be consistent with His holiness and conciliatory to His love; which would mercifully and yet righteously bridge that awful chasm between Himself and man?

### **THE CHASM BRIDGED**

A perfect reconciliation was brought about within God's being by a synthesis of His holiness and His love by which the claims of each were satisfied. God's holiness and righteousness compelled Him to pronounce the curse upon the serpent, the man, the woman and even upon the earth. God had said, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." God's word is true and is from everlasting to everlasting; God's righteousness compelled Him to carry out His judgment upon sin.

"But God's love put an exquisite, fragrant, fadeless rose in the midst of the thorns." Right in the very heart of the pronouncement of that awful curse recorded in Genesis 3:14-19 is that gracious, wondrous promise of salvation through a Saviour.

Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

God's holiness and love are melted together in this precious promise and out of this golden crucible emerges *the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and stretches itself across the impassable chasm sin has made between God and man. "The reconciliation was effected through the self-provided, suffering reconciliation of God in Christ. 'Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' Thus the antinomy in the divine Being itself was dissolved."

Before Adam and Eve left the garden of Eden the promise was made of a way of salvation for the whole human race which had been plunged into moral and spiritual ruin through sin. It was not man's way but God's — salvation through a Saviour.

## THE CROSS IN GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

But just here we may ask — and reverently so — Did Adam's and Eve's sin take God by surprise and did He have to think out a way of escape for man after his fall? Here we come to the very acme of the infinite grace of God. May the Holy Spirit grant each reader spiritual understanding to apprehend "the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of God which passeth knowledge."

No, Adam's sin did not take God by surprise, nor was God's way of redemption an after-thought. God knew even before the foundation of the world and the creation of man the sad and tragic devastation sin would work in the human race. God had anticipated the fall and was ready for it.

The cross which was to bridge the chasm made by sin was set up in love in the dateless eternity of the past before it was set up in promise in Eden or in history on Calvary. "The divine redemptive movement, *in purpose anterior to creation*, once determined upon, never paused until it victoriously expressed itself in the language of Calvary. . . The atonement in principle and in God is dateless, but as taking effect on man it is historical, though dateless. Redemption then, in the large, is anything but an afterthought, a mere appendix to make good an unexpected disaster which had overtaken God's universe. Both sin and redemption were foreseen from the beginning" (H. C. Mabie, *The Divine Reason of the Cross*, chap. 2).

There was a Cross set up in Heaven before it was ever set up on earth. The atonement for man's sin made visible, effectual and historical on Calvary, was wrought out in purpose and in principle in the heart of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the dateless past.

Revelation 13:8, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*"

Ephesians 1:4, "According as *he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Acts 2:23, "Him, *being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, *which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*"

What can these words mean but that in the counsels of the triune God in the eternity of the past the awful tragedy in Eden was foreknown and that, then and there, the wondrous plan of salvation through the Son's redemptive work was formed by which God-in-Christ should reconcile a lost, sinning race to Himself?

## REVELATION OF REDEMPTION

The Bible is the Book of Redemption, its one theme from the beginning to the end is *salvation through a Saviour.*

Luke 24:27, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, *he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*"

Luke 24:44, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, *which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*"

All through the law, the psalms and the prophets, God is unfolding to man His plan of salvation through a Saviour. By the sacrifices of the Old Testament He foreshadows the one supreme Sacrifice. By pen pictures and prophetic promises He foretells Him who is "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The story of His life with the record of its words and works; His death, resurrection and ascension as recorded in the Gospels; His doings as continued in the history of the Acts; the deeper revelation of Himself as the living, victorious, glorified Lord in the Epistles, and the promise and prophecy of a coming King in the Revelation; all have but one underlying purpose: namely, to reveal Him, not as the founder of a new religious order, nor as the propagator of a new ethical code, nor as the teacher of moral principles, nor as the reformer of man's external environment, but to reveal Him as the Saviour of mankind. The Father announced the coming of His Son as the coming of a Saviour.

Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for *he shall save his people from their sins.*"

Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David *a Saviour,* which is Christ the Lord."

Jesus Christ did not come only to teach or to preach or to heal: He came to *save.* Jesus Christ came for but one purpose which He Himself states in these words,

Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come *to seek and to save that which was lost.*"

He came to bridge the chasm which sin had made between God and man. No one else and nothing else could do this.

Life on the Highest Plane  
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## Chapter Eight God's Second Man — The Last Adam

Three things are clear: man cannot save himself, God has undertaken to save him, Jesus Christ is the means. The question follows:

What method would God use in salvaging the wreckage wrought in humanity? Would He try to repair the ruin in the old creation or would He replace it by a totally new creation? Would He reestablish the old order of humanity or would He inaugurate a radically new order?

The race had been ruined through a man, therefore it must be redeemed through a man. The first man had failed to fulfil God's original intention in creation so a second Man must come forth who would succeed in fulfilling it. The old order of which the first Adam was the head had gone down in ruin so a new order of redeemed men under the headship of the last Adam must be started. The sentence of death had fallen upon all mankind through the first Adam's disobedience; it must be lifted through the obedience of another Adam, whose work would be so perfect that He could be rightly called "the last Adam" for none other would ever be needed. The redemption wrought through the last Adam is set in sharp contrast to the ruin accomplished through the first Adam in Romans 5:12-21.

THE FIRST MAN  
THE FIRST ADAM

THE SECOND MAN  
THE LAST ADAM

"BY ONE MAN"

Disobedience  
Sin  
Death  
Judgment

*Ruined*      *Redeemed*

Obedience  
Grace  
Life  
Justification

### THE NECESSITY OF A MEDIATOR

God, then, will redeem man through a Man. What then would be required in a Redeemer? Remember that sin has caused a terrible breach between God and man. God is morally unable to have fellowship with the sinner and the sinner is morally unable to have access to God. If any real reconciliation is to be effected between them there is need of a Mediator, one who would stand between God and man. Such a Mediator must needs be one accepted and trusted by both parties, one who partakes both of God's nature and of man's nature, one who in the work of reconciliation would represent both God and man equally, one who would satisfy every claim of God upon man and of man upon God. In other words a true Mediator must be a God-man. The Saviour of men must be a God-man. Christ Jesus, the Mediator, is the *God*-man. He is not the man-*God*. He is not a man who became God but God who became man. He is not a man who for a special purpose and at a special time was invested with Deity but He is God who for a special purpose and at a special time was invested with humanity. He always was God: He became man.

Hebrews 1:1-3, "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 himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*"

No words could teach more clearly that Christ Jesus, the Saviour, the God-appointed Mediator, is God. He is the eternal Son, the Heir, the Creator, the upholder of the universe and all therein. He is the Son who is the commencement, the continuance, and the consummation of all things. He is the Son, the effulgence of the Father's glory and the very essence of His Person. He is the eternal Son who said of Himself, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58); who declared "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28) and on the eve of returning to His Father, prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

Only God could represent God in this mediatorship. As in creation so in redemption the Father works in and through the Son. "God in Christ was reconciling the world unto himself." Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and man is God, the eternal Son, "the Lord from heaven."

But where could God find one who would qualify as the *God-man*? Most surely not among the sons of men on earth, nor among the angelic hosts of Heaven for they are neither God nor man. One and only One even in Heaven itself could ever be thought of for such an exalted task — the eternal Son of God.

But how could even He be a Mediator for man? It is easy to see how the Lord from Heaven could represent an holy God but could He be a just, righteous, impartial representative for sinful man? If such a reconciliation demanded a divine-human Mediator how could He qualify who had been throughout all the eternity of the past the holy Son of God?

Just here we come to the place where the human mind has to acknowledge its finiteness, where human reasoning is silenced, where human comprehension confesses defeat, for we are lifted above all that is human, earthly and natural, up—up—up—into the realm of that which is divine, heavenly and supernatural, to the wondrous grace of God. Nothing but the grace of God could have provided such a divine human Mediator, could have conceived the thought of a *God-man*.

Again we are driven back in thought to that which took place in the eternal councils of the Godhead as the Omniscient Father, Son and Holy Spirit looked out upon the universe they were to make, upon the man they were to create, and foresaw the tragedy in Eden with all its terrible consequences. Then and there the Triune God looked from eternity to eternity and compassed fully in thought and plan all that would take place between, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) and "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Revelation 21:1). It was then and there determined that the eternal Son of God, the Alpha and the Omega, "the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Revelation 22:13), should lay aside for a brief



space of time His essential glory, and "be made in the likeness of men . . . [to become] obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8) that He in returning to glory might bring "many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10), to be forever with the Lord. There in the glory of eternity the grace of God fashioned the wondrous plan of redemption by which the eternal Son of God would become the incarnate Son of Man; the divine-human Mediator; the God-*man* whom both God and man would need when sin entered into the human race and separated man from God. Christ Jesus is the divinely provided Mediator.

1 Timothy 2:5, R.V., "For there is one God, *one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus.*"

In no book of the Bible is the person of Christ Jesus, the God-man and His work as the divine-human Mediator more clearly set forth than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In it we can trace back to glory the unfolding of truth regarding His glorious person and follow from Heaven to earth and from earth to Heaven again His gracious work as Redeemer.

We shall consider His work in the following chapters. May we concentrate our thought now upon His person. Who is He?

*The divine-human Mediator — the eternal Son of God — "The Lord from heaven."*

1 Corinthians 15:47, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is *the Lord from heaven.*"

John 1:1-2, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.* The same was in the beginning with God."

*The divine-human Mediator — the incarnate Son of Man — "The Word made flesh."*

John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*"

John 1:14, R.V., "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

"*The Word became flesh.*" "The statement is appalling, overwhelming. Out of the infinite distances into the finite nearness; from the unknowable, to the knowable; from the method of self-expression appreciable by Deity alone, to a method of self-expression understandable of the human" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, p. 73). Christ Jesus, the Mediator, is the God-*man*. The eternal Son of God became the incarnate Son of Man. Heaven came to earth.

In Hebrews, chapter 1, the Mediator is divine. He is called "Lord," "God," "the Son." In Hebrews, chapter 2, He is human. He is called "Jesus," "brother," "high priest." In chapter 1 He is as far above us as the heavens are above the earth; He is absolutely separate from us; He is in a class by Himself; He is the unapproachable; the



incomprehensible; the incomparable One. In chapter 2 He is on the level of our humanity, He has stooped to come to our human plane of life.

Hebrews 2:9, "But we see *Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*"

In chapter 2 He is one with us, He has entered into our humanity, He has actually become part of our flesh and blood.

Hebrews 2:11, "For *both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one*: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Hebrews 2:14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *he also himself like we took part of the same*; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

In chapter 2 He is the tender, sympathetic, understanding Son of Man: the gracious, gentle One.

Hebrews 2:17-18, "Wherefore *in all things it behoved 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."

Only Man could represent man in this mediatorship. Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and man is Man: the Incarnate Son: "the Word made flesh."

From the beginning to the end of Scripture this story is told: Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and man is *God*; the Eternal Son; the Lord from Heaven; the Alpha and the Omega. Christ Jesus, the Mediator between man and God is *Man*; the Incarnate Son; the Man of Galilee; the Babe of Bethlehem.

### **HOW THE ETERNAL SON BECAME THE INCARNATE SON**

That Christ Jesus was a divine-human Mediator is not only a fact of revelation but of history as well. Not only the words of Scripture but the A.D. on our desk calendar tells us that at some one point of time "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

Luke 2:12, "For unto you is *born this day in the city of David a Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find *the babe* wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

"*Christ the Lord*" — "a babe"! "*A Saviour*" — "wrapped in swaddling clothes"! *The Creator* of the universe — "lying in a manger"! *The Author and Sustainer of life* —

"born"! *The Father of eternity* — beginning to count His life by days and weeks and years! A *God-man*! It is a fact of revelation and of history staggering: stupendous: sublime. In this fact we are face to face with the miracle of miracles, the mystery of mysteries.

Many have asked the question, How can such a thing be? How did the Eternal Son of God become the Incarnate Son of Man? How was the uncreated Lord of glory born a babe in Bethlehem? The answer is plainly given in the annunciations of the angels to Joseph and to Mary.

Matthew 1:20, "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: *for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*"

Luke 1:30-31, 34-35, "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*"

Perhaps nothing in God's holy Word challenges man to greater reverence, deeper humility, sublimer faith, than this divine record of God's supernatural entrance into human life. Yet to the truly humble, reverent, worshipful, man of faith there is no difficulty in accepting the statement of revelation that through the supernatural operation of God, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary gave birth "to that holy thing which was called the Son of God." He reads and accepts these two annunciations without making any attempt to explain the heart of the mystery therein because he humbly acknowledges that it transcends all human understanding.

He sees in Christ Jesus, the God-man, essential Deity and real humanity, very God and very Man. He gladly acknowledges the supernatural in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He finds no way to account for such a result except in an adequate cause. A supernatural life demands a supernatural birth. So he joyfully accepts as true God's divine revelation that in the origin of the God-man there was to be found the cooperation of Deity and humanity. He believes that Christ Jesus, the God-man, was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," as the evangelical Church has believed through the centuries.

Thus the supernatural birth of the Lord Jesus is the connecting link between eternity and time: between Heaven and earth: between Deity and humanity: between God and man. Through the doorway of that supernatural conception there came into this world such a Person as had never lived in it before or ever has since. In Him there is essential Deity and essential humanity each in its wholeness and completeness. He is "the Son of God, the Word of the Father, be-gotten from everlasting of the Father, very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father. Being such, He took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man" (H.C.G. Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 57).

All that God is, Christ Jesus is. All that unfallen man was, He is. Nothing that belonged to Deity or to sinless humanity was lacking in Him. The divine and the human nature are each fully manifested in His unique personality. Both God and man are equally represented in the constituent elements of the personality of the God-man. He is veritable God and veritable man in one person.

Even though the God-man is a unit in whom God and man meet in a harmonious union of natures yet the root of His wonderful personality is God. Through all eternity He was God. At one moment of time He became Man. "The Son of God came from the eternities. The Son of Man began His Being." "*In the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was God." The Deity of Christ Jesus is basic and primary. "*The Word was made flesh*" and there was "born this day in the city of David a Saviour a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." The humanity of Christ Jesus is assumed and therefore secondary though essential. In the union of God and man God is the dominant factor. "The incarnation is the humanizing of deity and not the deification of humanity." The God-man is "God . . . manifest in the flesh?" (1 Timothy 3:16).

In the following Scriptural classic we have a very clear and beautiful revelation of the person of the God-man and the process by which He became such and the purpose.

Philippians 2:5-8, R.V., "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: *who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.*"

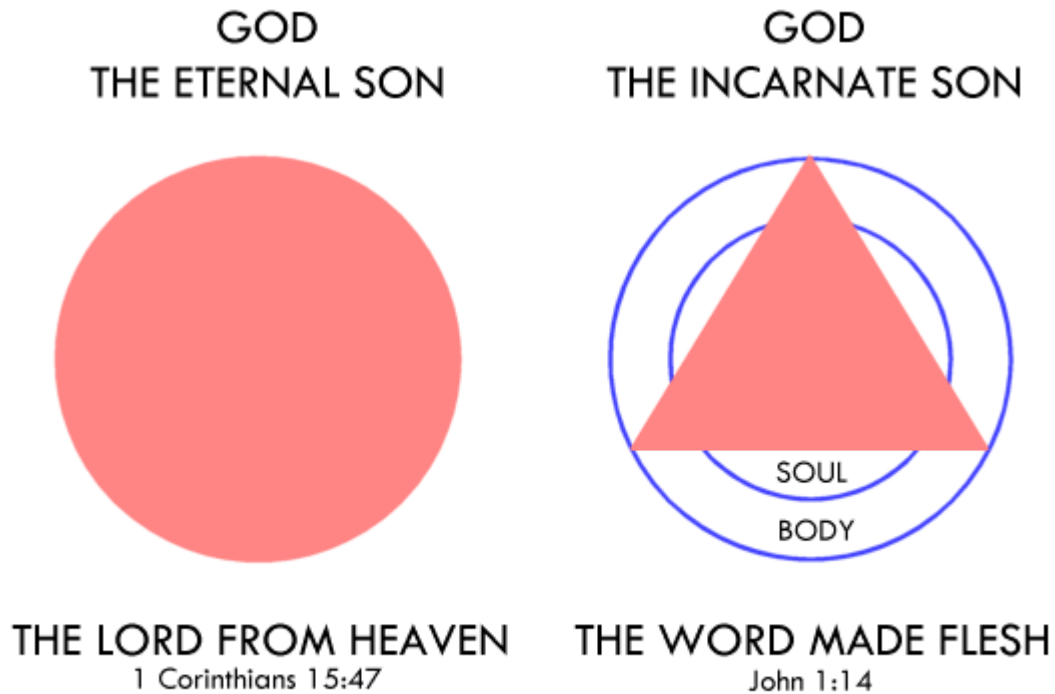
He was the Eternal Son, "existing in the form of God " and "on an equality with God." But in the presence of Eden's tragedy and man's need of redemption He counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped but by a sublime act of self-emptying He qualified to be the world's Saviour. While not divesting Himself of His essential nature as God, He became the Incarnate Son, "taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men," and submitted to the temporary non-manifestation of His divine prerogatives.

"He emptied Himself." He did this by permitting the essential glory and majesty of His divine person to be covered and hidden for a while by the flesh, by voluntarily putting His several attributes, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, under temporary limitations; and by placing Himself under the sovereign will of the Heavenly Father and under the control of the Holy Spirit.

"The emptying indicates the setting aside of one form of manifestation, in which all the facts of equality with God were evidently revealed, for another form of manifestation, in which the fact of equality with God must for a time be hidden, by the necessary submissiveness of the human to the divine . . . The Word passed from government to obedience, from independent cooperation in the equality of Deity to dependent submission to the will of God" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, pp. 76-77).

"He humbled Himself." God took man's form, the Lord of glory stooped to an actual union with human nature. In His humiliation He endured every conceivable suffering, the culmination of which was His cruel death on the Cross as a condemned criminal.

His voluntary self-humbling and self-emptying was for a purpose. "He became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross" that through His divine-human mediatorship He might become mankind's all-sufficient Saviour. (See Diagram 5.)



**Diagram 5: God--Manifest in the Flesh**

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## Chapter Nine

### Four Spans in the Bridge of Salvation — Incarnation

God in His infinite love has undertaken the restoration of mankind and the reconciliation of all things to Himself through the mediation of Christ Jesus. It is to be salvation through a Saviour.

If man's complete salvation is effectually accomplished, five things must be done.

First: Man must be restored to such a relationship with God as shall make possible the fulfilment of the original, divine intention in his creation.

Second: The sin question must be fully and finally settled. Sin must be dealt with in respect to its guilt, penalty, power and presence.

Third: Such propitiation and reconciliation must be effected as shall remove the barrier of separation between God and man and give to every person the opportunity of restoration to God's favour and fellowship.

Fourth: A new order of human beings must be inaugurated to supersede the old order which is in ruin and rejection.

Fifth: Satan, the original cause and continual instigator of sin in man, must be defeated and dethroned. God's sovereignty over all things must be fully restored.

To accomplish such a salvation God erected a bridge of four spans over the chasm made by sin. Each span is an integral part of the whole. Without any one span the bridge would be incomplete and inadequate. The four spans are incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Incarnation is the first span in the bridge of salvation.

That there would be an incarnation God's prophet had plainly foretold.

Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a *virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*"

Isaiah 9:6, "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*"

The moment sin stained the heart of humanity God gave the promise of a Saviour. All down through the centuries those who, like Simeon and Anna were eagerly anticipating the Coming One, could hear the advancing steps of the Lord of glory on His way from heaven to earth.

In the fulness of time He came. "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king." "God manifest in the flesh " was God's first step in the fulfilment of His prophecy-promise in Eden.

God's original intention in the creation of man was a being made in His own image. Through sin man lost all true knowledge both of God and of himself as God meant him to be.

Living in a world of sinful men the sinner had no one better than himself with whom to compare himself. So he measured himself with himself and with others like himself and the result has been self-complacency and self-sufficiency. Left to himself alone there is no desire for anything better for there is no sense of need. In his moral and spiritual darkness and degradation man is incapable of knowing aright either God or himself. Hence it is clearly evident that if man is to be restored to favour with God he needs a twofold revelation, a revelation of God as He is, and of himself as he is and as God means him to be.

## REVELATION — THE PRELIMINARY PURPOSE IN INCARNATION

God gave that twofold revelation in Christ Jesus, the God-man. Only the Son could reveal accurately and authoritatively the Father because He alone had seen the Father.

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

Matthew 11:27, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; *neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son.*"

But how could the Son make known to sinners on earth the ineffable beauty, the infinite love, the immeasurable worth of the Father in Heaven if He remained in the Father's bosom? There was but one way that the age-long cry of "orphaned humanity," "Shew us the Father," could be answered and that was by way of the incarnation. This is the way the Lord Jesus took and He told those who saw Him on earth that when they had seen Him they had seen the Father.

John 14:9, "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?"

In the incarnate Son the everlasting Father stooped to the level of man's power to comprehend Him. "Jesus is God spelling Himself out in a language that men can understand."

In the glorious person and the gracious work of the Son God was manifest. What the Son was God is. His character and conduct on earth is a mirrored reflection of His Father in Heaven. Blessing the little children and bidding them come unto Him; entering into the joys of the wedding feast and the dinner party; weeping with the bereaved sisters at the brother's tomb; seeking the companionship of kindred spirits in the Bethany home; talking with an outcast woman at Jacob's well; feeding the hungry multitudes who have followed Him into the desert; giving sight to the eyes of the man born blind; cleansing the temple of the avaricious moneychangers; denouncing the hypocrisy and self-righteousness of the unbelieving Pharisees; suffering in Gethsemane; dying upon Calvary; in all these ministries the invisible God is made intelligible to men.

But Jesus Christ came not alone to reveal God to man but to reveal man to himself. Through sin man was blinded both to the worth of God and the worthlessness of self. But in the man Christ Jesus God revealed to humanity His perfect Man, the divine Ideal. In Him man not only found all that he could ever want in God but all that God could ever want in man. What the God-man was on earth God desires every human being to be. "In him we see in perfect form what man in the divine idea of him is." By comparison of his life with that of the man Christ Jesus each one may see the depth of sin into which he has fallen and the height of holiness to which he may rise.

The twofold revelation in the God-man of God as He is and of man as he may be is surely the preliminary purpose in the incarnation but it is not the primary one. If the natural man had nothing beyond this revelation it would do him very little good. In the first place, how could his blinded mind apprehend it? His darkened heart accept it? His biased will act upon it? And if he could apprehend, accept, and act upon this revelation of God and of himself given in Jesus, where would it bring him? Such a revelation does not touch the sin question except to reveal to what depths man has fallen. In no sense can it settle it. It would only leave the awakened sinner with a greater consciousness of condemnation and a deeper experience of despair.

### **REDEMPTION — THE PRIMARY PURPOSE IN INCARNATION**

Revelation in itself is not a sufficient reason for the incarnation. God was not manifest in the flesh to mock sinners by giving them an example of a perfect life which they had absolutely no power within themselves to imitate. The God-man is an example for the saint to follow but not for the sinner.

Again Jesus Christ did not come to impart teachings which the natural man could obey. Nor did He come to earth to make it a more comfortable and habitable place for the sinner through the social reforms He would effect. Nor did He come as the founder of a new religion the spiritual head of another sect, which would go a step beyond other religions in resuscitating the old creation and in lifting the human race through gradual development to a higher moral and spiritual attainment.

Jesus Christ clearly conceived His mission to this sinful world to be that of a Saviour. Scripture always speaks of the incarnation in relationship to sin and to God's purpose in redemption. Redemption is the primary purpose in the incarnation. Christ came to save sinners like you and me.

Luke 19:10, "*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*"

Galatians 4:4, R.V., "But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, *that he might redeem them that were under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

1 John 3:5, R.V., "And ye know that *he was manifested to take away sins*: and in him is no sin."

The incarnation is undoubtedly the first span in God's bridge of salvation. But in what way is the fulfilment of God's redemptive purpose begun in the incarnation? What part does it have in man's restoration to the favour and fellowship of God?

We have already stated two consequences of the fall; first, the utter failure of God's first man to fulfil God's original intention in His creation; secondly, the total ruin of the old order of humanity of which Adam was the head. The first Adam failed both as a man and as a representative man. Through his sin God's union established in creation with himself and through him with the whole human race was broken. This must be restored. Sin had injected into man an evil nature which made man hostile



to God. He must be reconciled. Salvation demands reconciliation and reconciliation must be followed by conformity. Salvation from God's viewpoint does not mean merely the recovery of men from the guilt, penalty and power of sin but it means restoration to the likeness of God, even conformity to the image of His Son. It is not only a negative deliverance from a state of estrangement from and hostility to God but it is a positive entrance into a state of righteousness and holiness in God.

To accomplish such a salvation an altogether new union with the race must be made and it must be a union based on kinship of nature so that both God and man could find their fullest satisfaction and greatest blessedness in such fellowship. It was impossible for God to permit, or for man to enjoy, such an union as long as man had only an evil nature. For man to enjoy fellowship with God he must have a nature like God's. But how could he become a partaker of the divine nature? Here we discover the measure of God's grace. Here God's grace at its highest height stoops to man's need at its deepest depth. In order that man might become a partaker of the divine nature God would Himself become a partaker of human nature. In order to condemn sin in the flesh God would send His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Hebrews 2:14, 16-17, "*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. 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 behoved 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.*"

Romans 8:3, "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.*"

The act of the Son of God in becoming a partaker of our nature is the incarnation. This is followed very shortly by His death, resurrection and ascension by which we may become partakers of His nature. Thus in the incarnation we find the corner stone of the new union between God and man. But let us go further into its meaning.

God was faced with two necessities in any effectual plan of salvation: first, the sending forth of a second Man who would fulfil His original intention in man's creation; secondly, the providing of another Adam who would act representatively for the human race as the Head of a new order. The Man Christ Jesus meets both these necessities. He is God's second Man.

1 Corinthians 15:41, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: *the second man is the Lord from heaven.*"

He is God's last Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:45, "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; *the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*"



In the God-man, God made a new union with the human race; the ultimate issue of this union is a new race of redeemed men of whom Christ Jesus is the Head.

To fully qualify, however, as the last Adam in this mediatorial redemptive work, God's second Man must succeed where His first man failed, and He must succeed under the same circumstances and limitations. The first man failed on earth: the second Man must succeed on earth. The first man had a tripartite human nature subject to human limitations. The second Man must have a tripartite human nature subject to human limitations. The first man was tempted from without by Satan to doubt, disobedience and disloyalty. The second Man must be tempted in the same way, by the same person, to do the same thing. If God's second Man succeeded where God's first man failed then He would qualify as the last Adam to become the Redeemer of the human race and the Head of a new order of beings.

Let us see how God's second Man in the incarnation met every one of these requirements.

The eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. The only begotten Son left the Father's bosom in glory to be born of a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem. A Saviour was born in the city of David. The Lord from heaven came to earth.

God's second Man was human subject to human limitations. Christ's humanity began where ours did and went through all the stages of human life from infancy to manhood. Christ had a human ancestry.

Romans 1:3, "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, *which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.*"

Acts 13:23, "*Of this man's [David] seed* hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."

The Son of God became the Son of Man by a human birth. He was "a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes." Mary was His mother.

Luke 1:30-31, "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, *thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son*, and shalt call his name JESUS."

He was a "child" subject to the law of regular development, living in a home with brothers and sisters and growing under the training and discipline of His home life as other boys grow.

Luke 2:40, "And *the child grew*, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

He was "a man" and as a son and brother in the home, as a neighbour and tradesman in the community, as a citizen of the nation, He performed every duty and met every obligation that these human relationships demanded. Christ Jesus was not only "made in the likeness of men" but He was in His earthly life "found in fashion as a man" (Philippians 2:7-8). "In all things it behoved him to be made like

unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17). In everything the Son of Man was not only humanly perfect but He was perfectly human.

God's second Man had a tripartite human nature.

Luke 23:46, "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend *my spirit*: and having said this, he gave up the ghost."

Matthew 26:38, "Then said he unto them, *My soul* is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me."

Matthew 26:12, "For in that she hath poured this ointment on *my body*, she did it for my burial."

God's second Man had a spirit. It was ever open Godward and heavenward. He loved His Father and delighted in His Father's world, word and will. Communion with His Father was His supreme delight and He ever lived in the consciousness of the Father's presence (John 8:29) and in the joy of the Father's smile (Matthew 17:5). In Jesus the human spirit was always in perfect adjustment with the Spirit of God and was dominant over both His soul and body.

God's second Man had a soul. The last Adam thought, loved and willed as the first Adam had done. His familiarity with the Holy Scripture shows how He must have read and pondered the sacred writings. His parables taken largely from nature or the events of human life reveal the mould that shaped His thought life. He loved people and enjoyed fellowship with them. He was capable of intense sympathy and sorrow, of great indignation and anger, of deep joy and gladness, of exquisite appreciation and gratitude. Jesus had a soul in which was manifested a mighty capacity to think, love and will.

God's second Man had a body. He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh." The Samaritan woman knew Him to be a Jew. Mary Magdalene thought Him to be a gardener. Those who saw and heard Him in the synagogue at Nazareth while wondering at His gracious words still took Him to be only Joseph's son. He ate, slept, walked, worked and lived as other men did. While in His countenance, conversation and carriage there must have been that which His sinlessness and holiness produced which made Him different from all other men yet in His physical form there was nothing which differentiated Him.

God's second Man was not only human but He was subject to all the sinless infirmities and limitations of humanity. Jesus hungered, thirsted, slept, wept, wearied, mourned, suffered and died. "There is not a note in the great organ of our humanity which, when touched, does not find a sympathetic vibration in the might, range and scope of our Lord's being, saving, of course, the jarring discord of sin."

Hebrews 2:10-11, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, *to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

Lastly God's second Man was tempted from without by Satan to doubt, disobedience and disloyalty.

When Satan said "I will" to God, setting his creaturely will in opposition to that of his Creator, he broke the unwritten law that in God's universe there can be but one will and that the will of the Maker of all things. Lawlessness then became a fact in the celestial realm. It entered the world and began coursing through the veins of human life when God's first man broke God's law and disobeyed God's command.

From that day on down through the centuries until the angels sang the first Christmas carols over the manger cradle in Bethlehem there had never lived a man who had been perfectly obedient to God, who had fully kept God's law. Men had turned to their own way and done that which was right in their own sight. Even among those who through faith followed the Lord there was not one who lived only and wholly in the will of God.

But through the incarnation there entered into human life a second Man in whom mankind was again to be put to the test; a last Adam in whom the human race had its only and final hope of restoration to God.

The first man, Adam, and the whole race latent in him had gone down into ruin and rejection through disobedience. Now God had sent forth a second Man, a last Adam, who might lift the race into restoration and reconciliation upon the one condition of obedience. It must, however, be obedience from the beginning to the end of life; obedience at all times, in all things, under all circumstances, to all limits, in spite of all consequences; obedience, too, not merely in the letter but in the spirit; obedience to the whole will of God as the unalterable rule of life; such obedience as made the will of God the center of His life, the circumference, and all in between. The ruling passion of His whole being must be "God's will — Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else."

Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Would the Son of Man be able to qualify for Saviourhood under such a condition? Would He choose in all things to will Godward?

In coming into the world Christ Jesus had declared that the purpose of the incarnation was to do His Father's will.

John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*"

Part of His humbling in becoming the Son of Man was His willingness to leave the place of equality in sovereignty as God to take the place of subordination in subserviency as man. The Father's will was the Son's delight; it was the very sustenance of His life.

John 4:34, "Jesus saith unto them, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*"

He came, He lived, He worked, all with one purpose and one passion to do His Father's will. And what was the Father's will in relation to the human race and to the incarnation of His Son?

Joel 6:40, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

God's will was that every sinner should see in His Son a Saviour and believe on Him as such that the Father might lift from him the sentence of death and raise him up into eternal life in Him.

That this was the Father's will Satan knew; that Jesus Christ had yielded Himself unreservedly to the Father to carry out that will Satan also knew. His Satanic desire, his devilish determination, was to keep the Son of Man from doing the Father's will if possible. The slightest shadow of questioning regarding His Father's goodness would be doubt: failure to keep the holy law of God even in one point would be disobedience: the merest deflection of desire toward self-will would be disloyalty, and God's second Man, His last Adam, would have been disqualified for becoming the world's Saviour and the Head of a race of holy, heavenly men. That He would be tempted by Satan from the center to the circumference of His life, yea, that His Father must even permit such temptation would be easily understood even if Scripture did not state it so plainly.

Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*"

Hebrews 2:18, "For in that *he himself hath suffered being tempted*, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, *to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*"

To qualify as the Saviour of men and the Head of a race of redeemed men the Man Christ Jesus must be a victor over humanity's temptations one by one.

Throughout the thirty years of private life as a child, a boy and a young man, He had no doubt been tempted over and over again to doubt the Father's goodness, to disobey the Father's law and to be disloyal to the Father's will. In the home, at the carpenter's bench, in the manifold contacts of community life He met a daily assault in the common temptations of man. That He came through these years of obscurity with His manhood unsullied and unstained is amply attested by the Father's voice speaking those words of unqualified approval at His baptism. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As a Man Jesus had lived in private a life not only of absolute sinlessness but one that was wholly obedient to the will of God.

He emerged from private into public life and engaged upon His three years of public ministry. He publicly proclaimed Himself as the Messiah. But before He did this an event of tremendous significance occurred. At the Jordan Jesus was baptized by

John. This was His first act of identification with humanity's sin, it was the preliminary step in becoming the sinner's Substitute.

Crowds of people were thronging to John to be baptized, confessing their sins. Jesus came to be baptized. He had no sin to confess and He had no disobedience to God's law to repent of. But there on the banks of the Jordan God's second Man publicly acknowledged and accepted His responsibility as the world's Saviour by thus identifying Himself with the world's sin. The last Adam through His baptism committed Himself to bear all the consequences of a broken law on the part of sinners. At His baptism the Man Christ Jesus began to be numbered with the transgressors and the work of personal substitution which ended at Calvary was commenced.

Immediately after His baptism His public ministry began and we read, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness *to be tempted of the devil.*" As a man Jesus had met the manifold testings through the daily temptations incidental to private life and in them all had come forth Victor. But now as the Son of Man He is to have the decisive test of His whole life in a personal conflict with the devil himself. Man's salvation does not consist in deliverance from temptation but in deliverance from the possession and power of the tempter. The utter defeat and destruction of the devil himself was part of Christ's work as Saviour. Jesus Christ was committed to the salvation of mankind from sin in toto; this necessitated His going back to the very origin of sin in man and confronting and conquering its instigator. To such a task and to such a test "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness."

In this wilderness conflict the God-man is there not alone as a man but as the Son of Man, not only as an individual but as the Representative of mankind. Satan is there not only as a personal enemy of "the seed of the woman" but as the avowed foe of God and of the human race. The enmity prophesied in Eden is having there a concrete fulfilment; the conflict foretold, which has gone on in secret for centuries and which has its manifest fulfilment on Calvary, is brought out into the open and crystallized into actual combat here in the wilderness. The devil is no longer allowed to cover his identity through impersonation but is exposed as the devil and his purposes are openly revealed. There in the wilderness the spoiler of the human race faces the Saviour of the human race in a decisive and terrible conflict. It will be proven here for all ages to come who is the vanquished and who the Victor.

Satan had tempted Adam with the one purpose of gaining sovereignty over him and securing his worship. He had tempted God's first man in the garden of Eden at the one point where he could be disobedient and had met marked success. He had come forth victor. Adam had made a personal choice against the choice of God. He had acted independently of God and by so doing had stepped outside of God's will into self-will.

In the wilderness Satan impelled by the same purpose, tempted God's second Man employing the same methods and working toward the same end. A careful study of the great temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) will show that Satan made three separate attacks along three distinct avenues but with one purpose: to draw the God-man in desire and in deed outside the will of God; to induce Him to make a personal choice against the choice of God; to persuade Him to act independently. The supreme effort in each attack was to dislodge the God-man from the center of God's will and to lead Him into disloyalty to His Father.

The temptation in the wilderness was the decisive test not only for Christ but for Satan as well. If Satan could only triumph over the last Adam as he had over the first then he would be victor for all time to come. So he offered to Him in the wilderness all that he had gained in the garden even the kingdoms of this world if He would only fall down and worship him. Then he would indeed have dethroned God and the Satanic passion to be "like the Most High" would have been realized. The only hope of man's salvation would have gone, for Christ is the last Adam.

God's first man exercised his right to will and willed Satanward. God's second Man had also been given the same right to will and the power to will Godward. He exercised the right to will and chose to will Godward. The first Adam became the victim of *sin* and of Satan; the last Adam became the *Victor* over sin and Satan.

The question is bound to force itself upon us, "Was it as God or as man that the God-man triumphed over Satan?" Unconsciously perhaps we may comfort our-selves in defeat by thinking that He made use of the prerogatives and powers of Deity and that His victory was gained through means beyond the reach of man. If this be true the whole benefit to mankind of that wilderness experience is lost and it was only a personal and not a racial victory which the God-man gained. He alone would have profited by it but there would have been no meaning in it for you and for me. For if He had recourse to Deity and to divine power not at our disposal, then His triumph over sin and Satan does not avail for us.

This, however, was the very thing the devil was tempting Him to do and the very thing He resolutely refused to do. Satan tempted Him to use His power as the Son of God. "He declined to use the prerogatives and powers of Deity in any other way than was possible to every other man. He did not face temptation or overcome it in the realm of His Deity but in the Magnificence of His pure, strong Manhood: tested for thirty years in ordinary private life and for forty days in the loneliness of the wilderness. Jesus was in the wilderness as Man's representative" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, p. 170)

The last Adam gained His victory precisely where the first Adam failed. Scripture reveals two constituent elements in the God-man's triumph in the wilderness. The first is the sovereign control of the Holy Spirit over His whole being, spirit, soul and body. The second is His implicit obedience to God's Word.

Matthew 4:1, "Then *was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*"

God, the Holy Spirit, led Him into the wilderness to gain this racial victory. The temptation in the wilderness was no accident; it was not even the devil's doings; it was part of the plan. The temptation from without did not take Jesus unawares; He was prepared for this crisis. In His earthly life He was begotten, ruled, led, filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. While still having all the attributes of Deity, yet as God's second Man, He voluntarily submitted to a life of human limitations that He might be tempted in all points like as we are and gain the victory over temptation in the only way in which we can gain the victory. So He voluntarily put Himself under the control of the Holy Spirit, and lived His life and did His work only in the Spirit's power.

The temptation of the last Adam in the wilderness was an assault upon His entire personality. Satan approached Jesus through "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eye," and "the pride of life," but He found no vulnerable spot in Him. The human spirit in Jesus was dominant over both soul and body because it in turn was yielded wholly to the Spirit of God. The constituent parts of Jesus' wondrous personality were in perfect adjustment to each other because the whole life was lived in right relationship to God. Hence when Satan came he "found nothing in Him." It was victory gained through submission to the dominant control of the Holy Spirit. Such a victory may daily be yours and mine.

The second factor in the triumph of the God-man was His obedience to and use of God's Word. In Eden God's first man was defeated because he had listened to the devil's voice instead of to God's; he had believed the devil's lie instead of God's truth. In the wilderness God's second Man was victorious because He had listened to God's voice instead of to Satan's; He had believed God's Word instead of the devil's lie. More than that, He had used that Word as a weapon against the devil and with it alone repulsed the threefold attack.

Matthew 4:4, "But he answered and said, *It is written.*"

Matthew 4:7, "Jesus said unto him, *It is written.*"

Matthew 4:10, "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: *for it is written.*"

"Then the devil leaveth him" for the victory was won. It was the victory of perfect obedience to the will of God revealed in the Word of God. Such a victory may daily be yours and mine.

The victory won in the wilderness over the tempter was both perfect and permanent. For both Satan and Christ it had been a decisive test. From that time the devil never again approached Christ in the same way and Christ ever treated Satan and his emissaries as a Victor treats the vanquished.

But the temptation in the wilderness was humanity's test as well as Christ's. God was giving man another chance, a last chance. Therefore the victory was humanity's victory. The Lord Jesus was there as God's second Man qualifying to become man's Saviour and as the last Adam preparing to become the Head of a new race of men. "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" must be without spot. Satan had used every avenue of approach and every method of attack to make Him sin and to win His allegiance but he had failed utterly. The Son of Man came forth from this fierce conflict unscathed, un-sullied, unstained. At every point where the first man had failed, the second Man had succeeded; at every place where the first Adam met defeat, the last Adam won victory. The fight against sin, self and Satan had been completely won. His sinlessness qualified Him for Saviourhood. The victory in the wilderness was more than personal, it was racial; it was your victory and mine, if we will.

Sinlessness, however, is a negative condition of life and God requires more than that. For the fullest fellowship with Himself He demands something positive, even the perfection of holiness. So Christ went forth from the wilderness to live a perfect life



perfect in its words, walk, ways and work. Perfection marked everything in His character and conduct. He Himself testified both negatively and positively to the perfection of His life when He said "The prince of this world cometh, and *hath nothing in me*" (John 14:30) and "The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always *those things that please him*" (John 8:29). He was not only the sinless One but the perfect One.

The perfection of His life was the perfection of obedience, of unwavering, unvarying submission to His Father's will. When He emptied Himself of His equality with the Father and yielded the place of sovereignty for one of subserviency He surrendered completely His right to speak, to act, to will independently of His Father.

John 12:49-50, "For *I have not spoken of myself*; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: *whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*"

John 5:19, "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *The Son can do nothing of himself*, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."

Matthew 26:39, "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: *nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"

His obedience was the obedience of the God-man: of the divine-human Mediator, of God's second representative Man. It was therefore not due to any divine attributes of the Son of God but was an obedience the Son of Man learned through sufferings and sorrow, through trial and tribulation as He trod the pathway of all humanity.

Hebrews 5:8-9, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

Hebrews 2:10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

It was an obedience that did not end simply in the perfection of moral beauty and spiritual grace in daily life but one which led Him to drink the cup of suffering to its very dregs. It constrained Him, even compelled Him to be obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, because this was the Father's will. He measured up to the full stature of the perfection of holiness in God the Father through His perfect obedience as the incarnate Son.

In the person of the God-man the broken unity between God and man has been reestablished. For what purpose? For none other than that of restoring in man the image of God, disfigured and marred by sin. In the holiness of the perfect Man sinful humanity has not only a revelation of what God meant man to be but also a pledge of what man may become. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself that He might lift man out of what he is into what God is.



Romans 5:10, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, *we shall be saved by his life.*"

God proposes the inauguration of a new order of beings who are to be as heavenly and holy, as pure and perfect as He is; a race of redeemed men who shall be "conformed to the image of his Son." Undiscouraged by sin's tragic work God purposes to carry out His original intention that man shall be like Himself. The new union God made with humanity in the incarnation is His pledge of the fulfilment of such a purpose. He stooped to an actual identification with human nature and by that stoop He lifted human nature into an actual identification with the divine nature.

### **RECONCILIATION — THE PLENARY PURPOSE IN THE INCARNATION**

The revelation of God in Christ to man and the redemption by God in Christ of man were undoubtedly the preliminary and the primary purpose in the incarnation. But they do not exhaust the exceeding riches of God's grace in salvation nor complete His purpose in sending His only begotten Son into the world.

Sin despoiled both the human race and the natural universe. Sin produced chaos in the place of cosmos. Both heaven and earth suffered through sin.

Christ the Son is the Alpha and He is the Omega. He is the goal of all things in God's universe as He is the beginning. Christ Jesus is the firstborn of all creation; by Him all things consist and in Him shall all things be gathered together. God's eternal purpose in Christ His Son will be consummated in the reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth unto Himself.

Colossians 1:20, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, *by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*"

Ephesians 1:10, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times *he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*"

Incarnation then is the first span in the bridge of salvation, the first great movement toward the restoration of man to God and toward the reconciliation of all things in God's universe. It is no wonder the angels of heaven sang on that first Christmas morning. The birth of the Lord Jesus was the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy-promise of Genesis 3:15. It was the first step in the overthrow of God's arch-enemy; the first victory in the age-long conflict; the beginning of the end of sin. It was to the angels as to us, "the central point from which all events were to be hereafter measured. To Heaven as to earth it was to be the reckoning point of all time, and more, for B.C. and A.D. are to be the extensions of eternity" (A. Patterson, *The Greater Life and Work of Christ*, p. 136). ([See Diagram 5.](#))

## Chapter Ten

### Four Spans in the Bridge of Salvation — Crucifixion

Incarnation brought God to man but it could not bring man to God. The first span in the bridge of salvation demands a second.

In the incarnation God had not yet dealt with the sin question. He could go no further through the revelation of His own sinless, perfect life than to show men what they ought to be. Sin, the insuperable barrier between God and man, remained, and Satan, the archenemy of God, the tempter and deceiver of men, still held the human race in his control. Men did not even know how sinful they were; their darkened minds had no conception of God's real attitude toward sin, nor did they apprehend the awful certainty of its inexorable consequences.

The life and teaching of Christ Jesus had stirred the heart of a very few to desire something better and to seek Him as the Giver but the majority of those who saw and heard Him were indifferent to Him, and not a few even hated Him. Had He only lived His pure, holy life and died a natural death He would have been enshrined in the memory of but few of the choice, rare souls who appreciated His worth.

That something more than the life even of the holy Lord Jesus was needed to save men's souls is patent, something that would deal adequately with sin and all its consequences, something with power in it to defeat and to destroy the devil, something with the germinating seed of a holy, heavenly life. The world is full of leaders and reformers. Its fundamental need is a God-sent Saviour, One who can deal with sin in such a way as to bring satisfaction to God and salvation to man.

#### **DEATH THE GOAL OF INCARNATION**

The incarnation was not an end but a means to an end. In itself it had no redemptive value but it paved the way for His death which alone has redemptive value. It could never make an end of sin but it did give to the world a Saviour. Our Lord Himself and every New Testament writer set forth the death of Christ as the goal of the incarnation. He was born not merely a Man but a Saviour. He came not alone to live but to save, and to save He must die.

Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS: *for he shall save his people from their sins.*"

Luke 2:11, "*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*"

The eternal Son became the incarnate Son that He might lay down His life as the crucified Son. He became the Son of Man that He might die for the race of men.

Matthew 20:28, "Even as *the Son of Man* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

He took a body in incarnation that He might lay it down in crucifixion. He entered into a body supernaturally prepared for Him, which no sin had tainted and upon which death had no claim that He might offer it as a voluntary sacrifice unto God, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. "The body was prepared not so much for the birth as for the bruising" (Genesis 3:15).

Hebrews 10:5, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, *but a body hast thou prepared me.*"

Hebrews 10:10, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

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 death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Christ Jesus not only came into the world to die but He knew that He came for that purpose. From the very beginning of His public ministry the Son of Man had a brooding anticipation of "an hour" that was to come — an hour which in some eventful way would be the culmination of His ministry. "The sense of something tragic in His destiny was present in the mind of Jesus." Let us trace His anticipation of this hour through John's Gospel.

John 2:4, "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? *mine hour is not yet come.*"

This word was spoken on a joyous occasion at the beginning of His public ministry, when He was popular, when the people were receiving and following Him.

John 7:6, "*My time is not yet come:* but your time is always ready."

A large multitude of those who had been fed with the loaves and fishes had followed Him as He went from Capernaum across the sea. He used the occasion to give the wonderful discourse recorded in John six where He claims to be the Bread of Life sent by the Father to give His life for the life of the world. Life out of death was possible for all but only actual in the life of the one who "ate his flesh and drank his blood." The message of the cross was foreshadowed in these words. It was a hard saying even for His own disciples and many of them went back and walked no more with Him. The claim of Messiahship and Saviourhood angered the Jews beyond measure and instilled such bitter hatred into their hearts that they sought to kill Him. But Jesus was unperturbed, simply saying, "My time is *not yet come.*" He knew full well the time would come when their hate would expend itself on Him in cruel malignity.

Three times in John seven this expression is used. The Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand and the Lord Jesus was conscious of the plot on the part of the Jews to kill Him, so He says to the disciples,

John 7:8, "Go up to the feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; *for my time is not yet full come.*"

How significant are those words "full come." The shadow of the cross had already fallen over His life. From that time on He would walk in its ever deepening darkness.

At this feast the Lord Jesus was brought into open conflict with the Jews over the question of the authoritative origin of His doctrine. Again He made claims for Himself which so incensed them that we read,

John 7:30, "Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, *because his hour was not yet come.*"

The same thing was repeated as the Lord Jesus taught in the Temple (John 8:20). Jesus grew in popularity with the people. He makes even more daring claims to Deity and Messiahship and proved the truth of His words by the wonder of His works. The man born blind is given sight. Lazarus is raised from the dead. The religious leaders of the day are compelled to acknowledge the uniqueness of His power and they fear its influence upon the people. They frankly confess that "the world is gone after him" and openly declare that the thing must be stopped immediately. The hour draws nearer.

Just at this time when the Jews are most fiercely censuring and opposing Him a very significant thing happens. A deputation of Greeks, Gentiles, came to worship Him. Everything converges to show Christ that "the hour" He has so long anticipated is now near at hand. So when Andrew and Philip bring the message of the Greeks to Him, with majestic calmness and kingly control He replies, "The hour *is* come."

Up to this time He has not explained what He means by the oft repeated words "my hour." Several times He has foretold His death and resurrection but the disciples did not grasp His meaning. On this occasion, however, He speaks more explicitly.

John 12:23-24, "And Jesus answered them, saying, *The hour is come*, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die* it abideth alone: *but if it die*, it bringeth forth much fruit."

John 12:27, 31-33, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, *save me from this hour*: but *for this cause came I unto this hour*. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, *if I be lifted up from the earth*, will draw all men unto me. This he said, *signifying what death he should die.*"

The interval now was very short. Not a single event of that last week takes the Lord Jesus by surprise. He knows that His hour has come. In His last conversation and

prayer with His disciples He anticipates His exodus from this world and His return to His Father in Heaven.

John 16:28, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: *again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*"

John 17:1, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, *the hour is come*; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee."

When the Lord had spoken these words He went forth with His disciples unto a place called Gethsemane. There His soul began to be very sorrowful and oppressed, so much so that He left the companionship of the disciples and went alone with His Father to pray. Falling upon His face He cried,

Matthew 26:39, "O my Father, if it be possible, *let this cup pass* from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Returning unto His disciples and finding them asleep, He, still overborne with sorrow, went away a second time and prayed,

Matthew 26:42, "O my Father, *if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it*, thy will be done."

Again He came to the disciples and found them sleeping and again He left them to pray. Then He returned to them for the last time and said,

Matthew 26:45, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour *is at hand*, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Never in the history of man was such anguish of spirit and agony of soul endured as that of the Son of Man as He went to Calvary by way of the garden of Gethsemane. Heaven mercifully veiled the Sufferer from the gaze of men and left us only the thrice repeated pleadings of His prayer to indicate the nature and the depth of the suffering.

Two utterances in His prayer take us to the very heart of His anguish. "Let this cup pass from me" and, "Behold the hour is at hand." Surely the two bear some intimate relationship to each other. But what is the dreaded "cup" that must be drunk? What is the inevitable "hour" so long anticipated and now at hand? Did He not interpret the meaning of this oft used expression when He said "The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners"? From this and the events that follow in quick succession "the hour" could be none other than the hour of His death.

But why should He dread that or shrink from its approach? But an hour or two before He had said "Now I go my way to him that sent me." Would not death be to Him an hour of glorious release from a life envired by sin, suffering and sorrow? Would it not be the hour of reinvestment with all His kingly majesty and glory? Above all would it not be a return to the blessedness of immediate, intimate fellowship with His Father? Had He died a death such as other men die then it would indeed have been

just such a glorious release. Had death for Him been merely the culminating event in a life of unsullied perfection then it would have been such a gracious coronation. Some adequate explanation must be found for His dread of the approach of that "hour" that meant the drinking of a bitter "cup."

But another question must surely press in upon one who has beheld the Son as He is mirrored in the pages of the four Gospels and who has entered into a study of His matchless, pure life with any degree of spiritual appreciation and apprehension. The question is "Why need Jesus Christ die?" Scripture is very clear in its statement of what death is and who dies.

Romans 6:23, "*For the wages of sin is death.*"

Romans 5:12, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.*"

Ezekiel 18:20, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"

Death is the consequence of sin: it is the sinner who dies. And Jesus Christ died! The irresistible logic of these facts places before one two alternatives. Either Jesus was a sinner as all other men are and His death like theirs was the wages of His own sin, or else He died a death different from the death of all other men and for a reason entirely outside of His own life.

Was Jesus Christ a sinner? Did death come to Him as the penalty of His own Sin? Even His bitterest enemies in the time in which He lived and in all succeeding ages have never accused Him of sin. He said once to a group who were apposing and denying Him, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" But not one word of accusation did they bring against Him. Even Pilate said he could find no fault in Him. God testified to the absolute sinlessness and holiness of His life even before His birth in saying through the angel to Mary, "that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." After living in a world where He was continuously environed by sin and defilement God again testified through those who knew His character and conduct under all circumstances that He "*did no sin*" (1 Peter 2:22); "*In him is no sin*" (1 John 3:5); He "*knew no sin*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In His character, conversation and conduct He was the holy One of God "without blemish and without spot." If then death is the wages of sin, it had no claim upon Jesus Christ.

Why then did Jesus Christ die? How foolish and futile to look anywhere else for the answer to such a question but to God's divine revelation. There an absolutely sufficient and altogether satisfying answer is given.

1 Corinthians 15:3, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scripture."

Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*"

Isaiah 53:4-5, "*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was*

*wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."*

1 Peter 2:24, "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*"

In every one of these passages "death" and "sin" are shown to have an inextricable relationship to each other but it is invariably the death of Christ and the sin of men.

Words could not make it clearer that Jesus Christ died not because of anything in Himself but because of something in us; that it was not the wages of His sin but of ours that He paid on the cross. It was *our* sin He put away; *our* sins that He bore; *our* iniquities which were laid upon Him. Death had no claim on Him; then the death He died was for the sake of others and to accomplish something for them which they were unable to accomplish for themselves. The death of Christ was obviously for the purpose of taking up the sin question and dealing with it in such a way as to bring salvation to man.

But would it also deal with it in such a way as to bring satisfaction to God? God has an unalterable, irrevocable attitude toward sin which is most clearly revealed in His judgment upon it. "The wages of sin is death." Death is the expression of God's implacable condemnation of sin. "Death is the man's liability in relation to sin." Did the death of Christ deal with this divine judgment upon sin in a way that was satisfactory to God? God says it did.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, R.V., "*For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; And he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again.*"

The sinner's twofold relationship to God, the divine Judge and God, the gracious Saviour, may be stated as follows,

"The wages of sin is death,"  
"All have sinned,"  
"So death passed upon all men."  
BUT  
"One died for all,"  
"Therefore all died."

Death is the racial doom. In Adam all die because in Adam all sinned. Death is God's judgment upon sin and it rests equally upon all men. From the execution of this divine judgment there is no escape because it is the decree of a holy God and is therefore unalterable. Sin and death are inextricably interwoven: the sinner must die.

But the holy God is also a loving God. While He cannot change His attitude toward sin and His judgment upon it without denying His own nature yet His love with



perfect consistency can make some escape for the sinner providing whatever He does maintains unity in His own divine being. This necessitates meeting in full the requirement of His holy law. What, then, would that requirement be? That an adequate Substitute able to meet the full penalty of the law should voluntarily offer to take the sinner's place and die the sinner's death.

But where could such an adequate substitute be found? Only "a lamb without spot and blemish" could be accepted as an offering for sin. Only an absolutely sinless one could be the sinner's Substitute. It would require one who himself had fulfilled every demand of God's holy law to pay the sinner's penalty for a broken law. There was but one who had ever lived such a life on earth and He was the incarnate Son of God.

Would He voluntarily offer Himself as the sinner's Substitute and thereby assume all responsibility for the removal of the penalty, the power and the presence of sin in man knowing as He did that the penalty of sin was death, that the power of sin meant anguish of suffering consummating in crucifixion, and that the presence of sin involved even separation from God? Would He who never knew sin willingly be made sin on the sinner's behalf knowing full well that all the wrath of a holy God against sin would be spent on Him? (A very helpful treatment of this to which I am indebted is found in Armour, *Atonement and Law*).

Yes, He would do it. For the very purpose of becoming the sinner's Substitute the eternal Son had become the incarnate Son. But have we not discovered in this truth the secret of His dread of that "hour," His shrinking from the "cup"? It was not death He dreaded but the death of the cross which was "the wages of sin." What else could the thrice repeated pleading to the Father to remove "the cup" mean but that, in the death He was about to die as the sinner's Substitute, all the sin of the whole race of sinners with all its stain and stench would be upon Him? It is no wonder that the soul of the sinless Son of God cried out in an agony of suffering at the thought.

But the weight and wickedness of the world's sin was not all the "cup." Sin separates from God. God cannot stay in the presence of sin even when that sin is upon His own beloved Son. The Son of Man in the garden faces this awful consequence of Saviourhood. Could He assume *this* consequence of sin for the sinner's sake? Could He, who through all eternity in glory had rested in the intimate fellowship of the Father's bosom and who in His life on earth had enjoyed the vivid consciousness of His Father's abiding presence, consent to the inevitable even though momentary separation from His Father which the presence of the world's sin on Him would cause? Death is separation from God and separation from God is hell (2 Thessalonians, 1:7-9).

This, then, is "the cup" He could not drink were there any other possible way for the Father's will in man's salvation to be accomplished. This is "the cup" that caused the agony of soul in Gethsemane — an agony so terrible that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; an agony so awful it took Him back three times to the Father to cry out for release; an agony so intense that an heaven-sent angel appeared to strengthen Him. This is "the cup" that caused the intolerable anguish of spirit, which wrung from the sufferer upon Calvary that heart-breaking cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Could He drink *that* "cup"? Yes, even that if it were the Father's will and there were no other way in which sin could be dealt with to God's satisfaction and man's salvation. He who had been obedient to

the will of His Father every moment of His earthly life would be "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

There evidently was no other way for "while He yet spake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came and with him a great multitude with sword and staves." In quick succession follow the betrayal, arrest and trial of the Lord Jesus and then — the crucifixion of the Lord of glory.

The "hour" *had come*. The event foretold and foreshadowed for centuries had taken place; "the most stupendous event in the history of man, the only event in the history of God." The noon hour not only of time but of eternity had come; indeed it was the pivotal hour in the life both of heaven and of earth. "The Son of God has died by the hands of men. This astounding fact is the moral center of all things. A bygone eternity knew no other future; an eternity to come shall know no other past. That death was this world's crisis" (Sir Robert Anderson, *The Gospel and Its Ministry*, p. 12).

The death of Jesus Christ is the pivotal fact in Christianity. It is its very heartbeat; its life's blood. Without it Christianity would not be. His worth lay not in the life He lived but in the death He died. His death was not so much the culmination of the victorious, obedient, holy life as its coronation. His incarnation was but paving the way for death; His death was the goal of incarnation.

It is not merely the fact that Christ died that is vital but that He died *the death of the cross*. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 foretold a bruising and it was in the bruising of the heel of the woman's seed that the promise of the sinner's salvation was to be found. The Old Testament sacrifices made for the sake of sins year by year required the blood of goats and calves. These sacrifices and this blood-shedding were the foreshadowing of the one perfect sacrifice of the Son of God as He poured out His life's blood on Calvary for the salvation of sinners. While the prophets of old did tell us something of the circumstances that would attend the birth of Jesus Christ yet the burden of their message was of One who would be "wounded," "bruised," "scourged," "oppressed," "afflicted." By the mouth of all the prophets God foretold that Christ should suffer. Over and over again the Lord Jesus told the disciples that He "must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and be raised again." On the way to Emmaus as He walked and talked with the two disciples who were recounting to Him the tragedy of His crucifixion He said unto them,

Luke 24:26, "Ought not Christ *to have suffered these things*, and to enter into his glory?"

The theme of the entire Bible is *the Lamb slain* from the foundation of the world. "Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds; it is red with redemption truth." A suffering, crucified Christ was the Christ preached by the Apostles and to them His sufferings were a vital factor in the sinner's salvation because of their expiatory nature. Paul testifying before King Agrippa preached a suffering Christ.

Acts 26:22-23, " Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: *That Christ*

*should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead."*

Peter told us that it was through the victorious, atoning sufferings of Christ that men were brought back to God.

1 Peter 3:18, "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*"

John taught that there was no cleansing power except in the blood of Christ shed on Calvary.

1 John 1:7, "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

Respectable sinners will flock to the church today to hear ministers preach on the life of Jesus; many are even not averse to listening to an occasional sermon of the death of Christ, providing that death is preached only as the greatest example of sacrificial love, or as the culminating event in a life of obedience, or as an act of martyrdom in a good cause. But in this age there is a widespread refusal on the part of the man in the pew, and on the part of the man in the pulpit a conspicuous rejection of the Biblical, evangelical teaching regarding the death of *the cross*. The reason for this will grow more apparent as we proceed with our studies.

### **THE CROSS OF CHRIST — THE GREAT DIVIDE**

The cross of Christ makes a clean-cut cleavage between the two spheres, the sphere of death, darkness and disorder, and the sphere of life, light and liberty, and it challenges sinners to decide in which they purpose to live. The cross of Christ is the battlefield on which the conflict between Satan and God over the sovereignty of human lives is being waged and it compels men to take sides either for or against God. The cross of Christ marks the boundary line between the kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God and it calls subjects in the one to come out and to become subjects in the other. The cross of Christ finds men living on the plane of the natural and it opens a way for them to live on the plane of the spiritual and then appeals to them to enter the open door. The cross of Christ is the Great Divide: it separates men into two classes, the unsaved and the saved.

1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

### **THE CROSS OF CHRIST — A DOUBLE EXPOSURE**

The cross of Christ is the place of exposure. There as nowhere else is revealed the hatred of man for God and the love of God for man. Sin is seen at its worst and love is seen at its best in the cross. Man's sin and God's love both reach a climax on

Calvary. There the hideousness of the one and the glory of the other are brought out into sharpest relief.

Acts 2:23, "*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*"

The desperate, despicable wickedness of the human heart is uncovered at Calvary. All the rebellion, self-will and enmity of the natural man found vent in this one act. In the crucifixion of the Holy One sin came out into the open and disclosed its inwardness.

"Him — ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." *Sin* nailed the *Saviour* to a cross and by doing so exposed to the world its ugly hideousness. Sinners stained their hands with the blood of their Saviour and thereby revealed the length and breadth, the height and depth of the infamy of sin.

However, the sin of man could not outstrip the love of God. Nor could sin defeat God by taking Him unawares. Before that hydra-headed monster had raised its head in rebellion against God He had accomplished its defeat. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." In the eternal counsels of the Godhead the cross of Christ was set up *in love* before man was made or the world created. In the atoning death of the well-beloved Son on the cross of Calvary God was fully prepared to assume responsibility for sin and all its consequences. God, the Father, spelled out in capital letters on the cross His unquenchable love for sinners.

The cross of Christ reveals not only the love of the Father but the love of the Son as well. In the lament over Jerusalem, in the parable of the father's love for the prodigal, in the tender look at the denying Peter, and in the pathetic question to Judas the betrayer, Jesus Christ showed His sorrow for sin and the outreaching of His loving heart to the sinner. But only in the laying down of His sinless life in death as the sinner's Substitute do we see the perfect outshining of His infinite, limitless love. With the most perfect apprehension of what the sin of man was on the one hand, and of what the mind of God toward sin was on the other and of sin's due from God, there went up from the depths of Christ's sinless humanity a perfect amen to the righteous judgment of God against sin, and a willingness to bear that judgment.

The cross of Christ is the heart of God broken by sin. It tells you and me that the God who must judge and punish sin will save and forgive the sinner. It discovers to us the unfathomable depths of God's love.

Romans 5:8, "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"

John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.*"

Galatians 1:3-4, "*Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.*"

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST — THE PLACE OF VICTORY

God has but one problem in His universe it is sin. All other problems of whatever nature emanate from this one. The sweat of grinding toil, the suffering of broken hearts, the sorrow of the world's crushing maladjustments, all have their beginning in sin. God has but one enemy in the universe — it is Satan. All other enmities, whether among angels or men, have their ultimate source in him. To regain His rightful sovereignty over the world and in the human race God had a double victory to win. This twofold victory was won through the Saviourhood of Jesus Christ. Salvation from sin and all its consequences, deliverance from Satan and all his allies, were gained for the sinner at the cross.

The Old Testament classic which reveals Jesus Christ as the Sin-bearer is Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:4, 6, 10-12, "*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.*

*And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

*When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.*

*For he shall bear their iniquities.*

*He bare the sin of many."*

The New Testament is full of the same truth.

John 1:29, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*"

Hebrews 9:28, "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many; and unto them which look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*"

Jesus Christ faced the problem which sin had created and solved it by taking upon Himself the whole responsibility for it. When He entered into human life and as the Son of Man became the connecting link between God and the ruined race, He pledged Himself to become responsible for sin and its effects.

Sin had brought upon man four terrible consequences for which Christ as Sin-bearer assumed responsibility. The first is guilt. The whole world is guilty before God (Romans 3:19). The whole of man is defiled and depraved. That this guilt might be removed God made Christ sin and then treated Him as sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21, R.V., "*Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.*"

The second is death. "The wages of sin is death." The sentence of death rested upon the whole human race. As the last Adam Jesus Christ assumed all responsibility for the first Adam's sin and its consequences. Therefore He executed the death sentence upon sinners by Himself dying.

Romans 5:6, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time *Christ died for the ungodly.*"

The third consequence of sin is the curse. Sin is lawlessness and the penalty for broken law is the curse. Jesus Christ acknowledged the justice in God's judgment upon sin and voluntarily offered to assume even this responsibility on the sinner's behalf.

Galatians. 3:13, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*"

The fourth consequence of sin is the wrath of God. God hates sin. God's holiness demanded that He take some action against it. So God was compelled to decree that sin would bar sinners from His presence through time and eternity. Here again Jesus Christ assumed responsibility for the presence of sin in men and on the cross of Calvary bore the full force of God's wrath against it even to the point of conscious separation from His Father's presence.

Romans 5:9, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, *we shall be saved from wrath through him.*"

In becoming the Sin-bearer Jesus Christ fully met and solved the problem of sin. "In His death everything was made His that sin had made ours . . . everything in sin except its sinfulness" (James Denney, *The Death of Christ*).

The cross of Christ is God's starting point of victory over Satan and all his allies. God is the One who has been hurt most by sin. "Satan was putting the knife into God's heart through Adam's hand." So any effectual dealing with sin must go back to its first cause and any permanent victory for God must be a crushing defeat for Satan.

The first curse pronounced after the fall was upon the serpent. The serpent's curse and the Saviour's cross are inextricably interwoven. The prophecy containing the curse foretells a double bruising. "It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Men and women are being taught that the record of the fall in Genesis three is just a myth and that no scholarly person believes it today. This is indeed the devil's lie and he has a very good reason for telling it. By the death of Christ his head was bruised, his doom was sealed. The cross of Christ robbed that Satanic usurper of every vestige of rightful claim to the world and of all dominion over any man or woman who fully trusts in the atoning blood of the Saviour and who yields to the Lordship of Jesus. Christ's cry of victory from Calvary's cross "It is finished" was Satan's death knell. The victory over the devil commenced in the wilderness, continued in Gethsemane, culminated on Calvary. The hour of Christ's death was the hour of Satan's defeat.

John 12:31, "*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*"

The death of the cross deprived him of his power and rendered him inoperative.

Hebrews 2:14, R.V., " Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also in like manner partook of the same; *that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*"

The death of Jesus Christ meant an open and decisive victory for God over all the principalities and powers in rebellion against Him. It severs the believer from the powers of darkness.

Colossians 2:14-15, "*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*"

The devil has two active, aggressive allies in his diabolical work of keeping sinners living in self-will and rebellion toward God. They are the "world" and the "flesh." For the defeat of both of these God has made ample provision in the cross of Christ.

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

Galatians 5:24, "And they that are Christ's have *crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts."

In the cross of Christ the sinner who truly desires it may find complete deliverance from the evil one and all his entanglements. Satan's reign over him may end there if he seeks release through the cross.

### **THE CROSS OF CHRIST — A DIVINELY PROVIDED MEETING PLACE**

Sin made every man unrighteous in God's sight, (Romans 3:1:12) and by so doing it created an impassable chasm between a righteous God and an unrighteous sinner. It did more than that, it totally disqualified man for doing anything to bridge this chasm thus placing upon God the whole responsibility of making a way of access into His presence and of providing a meeting place between Himself and the sinner.

But how could a righteous God be just and the justifier of sinners (Romans 3:26)? How could God maintain His holiness in His dealing with sin and at the same time manifest His graciousness in mercy toward the sinner? How could God provide such a meeting place and not deny Himself through compromise?

Before God was a Law which was holy and right. It was the expression of His own character; the essence of His own nature. To ignore or condone man's rebellion and disobedience as evidenced in that Law broken would be to deny Himself. God could not do that; He must be true to Himself so He must treat sin as sin and deal with it as such. It must be condemned and its merited punishment meted out. "Even God cannot change the character of righteousness by altering, or lessening to the slightest degree, its holy demands. What is done for the satisfaction of His love in



saving any one whom His righteousness condemns must be done in full view of all that His righteousness could ever require" (L.S. Chafer, *Salvation*, p. 27).

Before God was not only a broken Law but a broken relationship, a broken bond of love which had united Him to the human race. Before Him, too, was the desperate need of those whom He loved with an everlasting love, the undone condition of those who were precious in His sight. Before Him was His own broken heart made desolate by the prodigal's departure into the far country.

Viewing the sinner in his relationship to God his fundamental need is a way of access and acceptance with God despite his guilt. Viewing God in His relationship to the sinner His fundamental necessity is a way of granting favour and fellowship to the sinner despite His holiness. A meeting place between a righteous God and an unrighteous sinner is the demand made upon the righteousness of God. But it is equal to even this necessity for in His death upon Calvary's cross Jesus Christ became the propitiation for the sins of the world.

1 John 2:2, R.V., "*And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.*"

Romans 3:25-26, R.V., "*Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.*"

To the spiritually minded Christian who has a realization of the awful chasm sin had made between him and his God the truth that centers around the word "propitiation" is inexpressibly precious. But to the natural man living still in pride, rebellion and self-satisfaction, it is insufferably offensive.

"Propitiation" means a mercy seat or covering, a divinely provided meeting place. In Old Testament times on the Day of Atonement the great high priest took the blood of the sacrificial lamb into the Holy of Holies and with it sprinkled the Mercy Seat. Within the ark under the cover of the blood was the broken Law. The blood-sprinkled mercy seat provided a meeting place between God and the sinner where the guilty one could come to God without remembrance of his past offences and without fear of judgment and where the Holy One could receive the sinner without compromise and yet without condemnation. "A holy God could righteously meet a sinful man and a sinful man could fearlessly meet a holy God."

God set forth His well-beloved Son to be such a propitiation for all the guilty sinners in all the world. Through the shedding of the precious blood of the Lamb of God on the cross of Calvary such a covering for sin and for broken Law was provided. In His death Jesus Christ honours God's holy Law by bearing in full the punishment meted out to the sinner for breaking it. Thus in the crucified Lord the sinner has found a meeting place with God and a way of access into His favour and fellowship.

**THE CROSS OF CHRIST — A DIVINELY PREPARED TURNING POINT**

A double barrier separates God and the sinner. Sin has caused man to be offended toward God as truly as it has caused God to be offended toward man. The cross of Christ shall have failed to deal adequately with sin if it only removes the cause of offence in its Godward aspect and does not equally remove it in its manward aspect.

And this is exactly what the cross of Christ does. "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). "By grace are ye saved through faith." The grace of God built the bridge of salvation before ever a single sinner made a start toward crossing it. Grace took God into the garden in the cool of the day to seek the first two sinners and to offer them the gracious promise of salvation through a Saviour even before He dealt righteously with their sin in pronouncing upon them the judgment of the curse. Even in the prophecy-promise given in Eden, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. God took the initiative in effecting reconciliation by giving His Son to die.

Romans 5:10, "For if, when we were enemies, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life."

Colossians 1:21-22, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, *yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death*, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight."

2 Corinthians 5:18, "And all things are of God, *who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*."

The Son of God endured the suffering and the shame of the cross that thereby He might tell a world of sinners who have turned their backs on God that God loves them with an everlasting love. When the sinner sees the Saviour suffering, the just for the unjust, when he sees Christ crucified by *his sin*, dying *his death*, enduring *his punishment*, then his heart is melted, his rebellion is removed, his whole attitude toward God is changed from enmity to love, from estrangement to fellowship, from indifference to devotion, from fear to faith, from shame to peace.

In Christ crucified God has provided such propitiation and reconciliation as has made possible the removal of the barrier of separation between God and man, and has opened a merciful yet righteous way of access and acceptance; thus giving to every man who will avail himself of God's grace the opportunity for full restoration to God's favour and fellowship.

### **THE CROSS OF CHRIST — THE END OF THE OLD CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW**

Through propitiation and reconciliation accomplished in the death of Christ adequate provision has been made for a change of relationship between the sinner and God which effects a radical change in the sinner's position before God. But is there provision for a change in his condition also? The natural man is a slave, "sold under sin" (Romans 7:14).

Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. God's boundless grace was undaunted by the sinner's helpless, hopeless condition. God's right to proprietorship through creation still remained but it had been lost to Him through man's surrender of himself to the sovereignty of another. But God would Himself go down unto the slave market of sin and buy back that which was His own. He would then take the sinner out of the sphere of Satan, out of the slave market of sin, and set him free in the glorious liberty of a new life in Christ.

Such redemption demanded a ransom. It required a life for a life. "The life is in the blood." To redeem the race from the bondage of sin involved the paying of a price which was nothing less than the precious blood of the spotless Lamb of God. To buy back His own for a possession God paid the costly price of His own blood.

Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, *which he hath purchased with his own blood.*"

1 Peter 1:18-19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"

Revelation 5:9, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof for thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

But God did not go into the slave market of sin only to buy the captive sinner but also to bring him out from that old sphere of bondage and set him free in a new sphere of liberty. Not alone would He lead him out of Egypt but He would bring him into Canaan. Christ Jesus would become not only the sinner's Saviour but He would be the believer's Lord and Life. In the cross of Christ God rejected the old order of fallen, sinful humanity "sold under sin" through the first Adam's disobedience that He might raise up a new order of holy, heavenly beings redeemed from sin through the last Adam's obedience.

The death of Christ upon the cross not only redeems but it recreates; it not only provides complete emancipation from the old life but abundant entrance into the new.

Exodus 13:3, "And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, *in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place.*"

Exodus 13:11, "And it shall be *when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites*, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee."

Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

## **THE CROSS OF CHRIST — THE PLACE OF DECISION THAT DETERMINES DESTINY**

"The cross of Christ has measured out the moral distance between God and man and has left them as far asunder as the throne of heaven and the gates of hell" (Sir Robert Anderson, *The Gospel and Its Ministry*, p. 25). Scripture bears ample testimony to the solemn truthfulness of these words.

But praise God it is equally true that the cross of Christ has measured out the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God in the gift of a Redeemer who closed the gates of hell and opened the gates of Heaven for all who will believe.

As sin through Adam had been universal so salvation through Christ must be made potential to all. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound and opened a way back to God for every sinner. The bridge of salvation provided a way out of the old sphere into the new for all who will acknowledge themselves sinners needing a Saviour.

Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation *hath appeared to all men.*"

1 Timothy 2:5-6, "One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; *who gave himself a ransom for all.*"

Isaiah 53:6, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*"

Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; *that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*"

In tenderest compassion God broods over every sinner and bleeds for his sin. His great yearning heart of love reaches to the uttermost corner of His universe and seeks to draw each heart unto Himself through His Son.

1 Timothy 2:3-4, R.V., "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; *who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.*"

1 Timothy 4:10, "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, *who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*"

2 Peter 3:9, R.V., "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, *not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"

That all men might have an adequate opportunity to know God's way of salvation He commanded the disciples to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth preaching it to every creature.

Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and *unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"

Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel to every creature.*"

God commands every sinner who hears the Gospel to repent and turn to Him.

Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but *now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*"

God invites all sinners to come to Him and promises eternal life to all who truly believe and receive His Son.

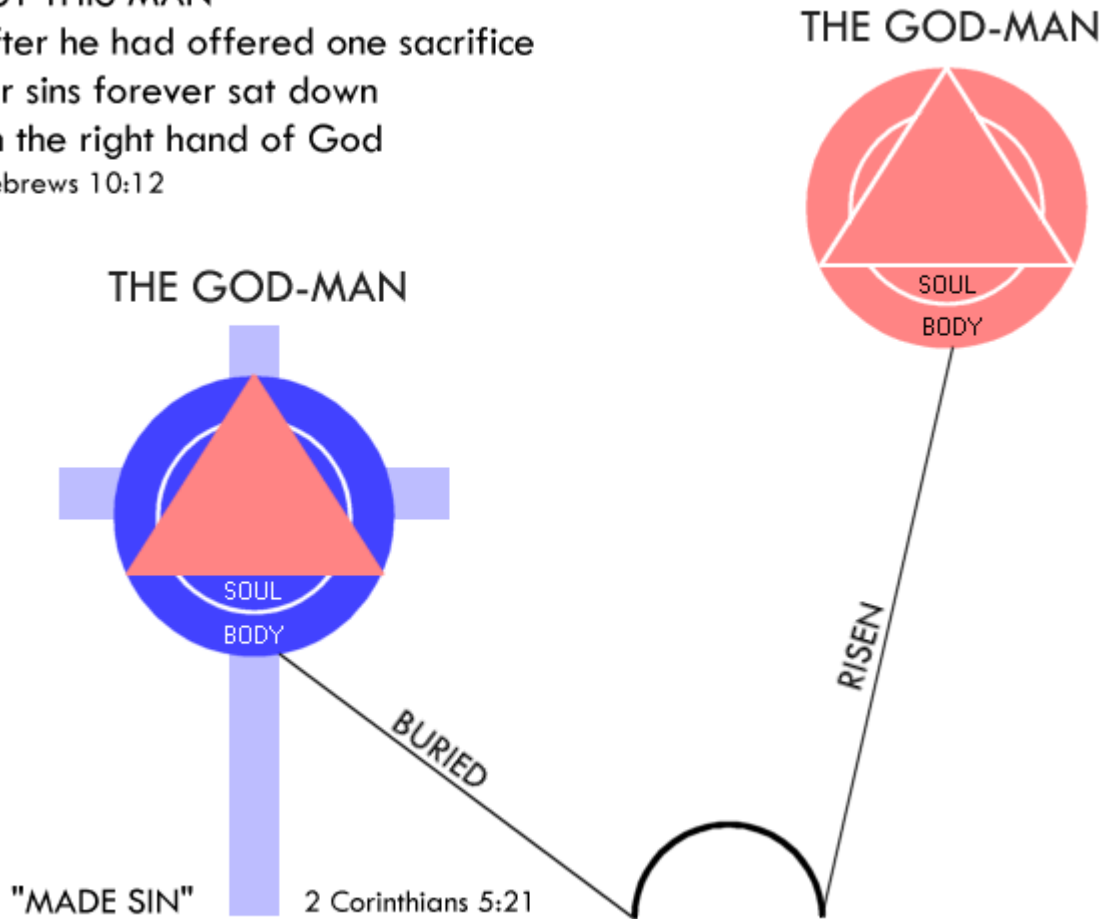
John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

Countless sinners throughout the ages have refused the grace of God manifested in His salvation and have rejected Christ, the Saviour, but the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary opened a way back to God for all men everywhere. "No man is lost for want of an atonement, or because there is any other barrier in the way of his salvation than his own most free and wicked will."

Dear reader, on which side of the cross of Christ are you living? Your relationship to the crucified Christ will determine your destiny. (See Diagram 6.)

BUT THIS MAN  
after he had offered one sacrifice  
for sins forever sat down  
on the right hand of God  
Hebrews 10:12



**Diagram 6: The God-man -- Crucified, Risen, Ascended**

Life on the Highest Plane  
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## Chapter Eleven Four Spans in the Bridge of Salvation — Resurrection

Having granted that incarnation and crucifixion are necessary spans in the bridge of salvation, one is driven to the acceptance of resurrection as the third span or all that has been gained through the other two will be lost.

The intimate relationship between these three fundamental truths, their unbreakable connection in fact, is brought out very wonderfully in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:22-36. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is shown to be the essential vindication of His incarnation and crucifixion. Without the resurrection the other two spans in the bridge of salvation would be futile; through

the resurrection every claim God had made regarding the person and work of His Son both had been vindicated and realized.

Let us get the setting of these words. A tremendous event had taken place. It was a postresurrection event. The risen, ascended, exalted Christ had poured forth the Holy Spirit who had filled every believer and had caused each one to speak in another tongue the wonderful works of God so that people from every nation under Heaven gathered in Jerusalem at that time had heard them speak in their own language. The multitude were confounded and amazed and asked for an explanation.

This the Apostle Peter gave in a sermon the theme of which was the resurrection of Christ. He deals with it both in retrospect and in its relationships. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit which they had seen and heard had been promised, but it was conditioned upon the realization of God's eternal purpose which He had purposed in Christ, His Son (Ephesians 3:11) and upon the fulfillment of His divine plan. According to that purpose and plan it was the risen, exalted Christ who was to shed forth the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:32-33, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses, Therefore *being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*"

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an accomplished fact attested to not only by the little company of believers but by devout Jews from every nation. The shedding forth of the Holy Spirit was proof that Christ had risen from the dead. Now that we have the setting of the words under consideration let us study their significance.

### **THE RESURRECTION — AN ESSENTIAL VINDICATION**

Acts 2:22, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; *Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did through him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.*"

In these words the Apostle Peter records God's satisfaction in the person and work of the incarnate Son. He had sent His Son into the world to live such a life as none other had ever lived and to do such a work as none other had ever done. He had lived the life and done the work and had received the Father's unqualified approval.

Let us get clearly before us in review what the task was to which the Father had set His Son. In the equality of Deity, Father and Son had worked together to create a universe and the race which was to inhabit it. Into this perfect creation sin had entered first through a celestial being and then through a human being. Death, darkness and disorder followed in the trail of sin and threw everything in God's world out of harmony with Him. God Himself was even dethroned both in His world and in the hearts of men.

As Father and Son had worked together in the creation of the race so would they work together for its regeneration. God in Christ would reconcile the world unto



Himself. As sin had entered the world through God's first man, salvation would enter through God's second Man.

To this end the eternal Son would become the incarnate Son. The second Man would start exactly where the first man started, with a perfect life, a human nature, a direct fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit, the right to will and the power to will Godward, but He would start in a world where ever-thing would work to drag Him down into defeat and destruction. In such a world He must live a life such as none other had ever lived a life of unspotted holiness, unceasing victory and unwavering obedience. It must be a life literally "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," unsullied by either the slightest desire to sin born from within or by the yielding to any temptation to sin brought from without. It must be a life from center to circumference lived wholly within the will of God.

Through such a holy Man God would establish a new union with the human race and through such a sinless Mediator God would open a way of reconciliation and redemption to rebellious sinners.

The Apostle Peter in the sermon at Pentecost witnessed to the fact that the incarnate Son had lived such a life on earth. Three times God had even opened heaven and spoken to all who would hear the words of divine satisfaction in the perfection of His Son. But the world did not reckon to it such worth or give to it such honour. Many had rejected Him; some had even dared call Him an imposter and a blasphemer. A further public witness and open vindication of the Father's satisfaction in the perfection of the Son was essential. This God gave in the resurrection.

### **THE RESURRECTION — A CONSUMMATED VICTORY**

*Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."*

In undertaking the reconciliation and redemption of the world God obligated Himself to deal fully and finally with sin and all its consequences. Every man was a sinner and the sinner's greatest need is a Saviour.

In the incarnation God provided a potential Saviour in the Holy One who was always everywhere Victor. But to make this potential Saviourhood effectual for man's salvation it must be actualized. Christ's personal victory must become a racial victory if it avails for the sinner. But the only way in which the benefit of Christ's victory over sin could be bestowed upon the sinner was by having the guilt, penalty and judgement of sin borne by the Saviour. If the sinner were to take Christ's place of holiness, victory and obedience Christ must take the sinner's place of sin, death and judgment. If any sinner were ever saved Christ must take upon Himself the sin of all sinners and bear its full responsibility. To pay the wages of sin the Author of life died. In the deep and unfathomable mystery of the Cross His Spirit was separated from God and went into Hades, and from His body which went into the grave (Acts 2:27).

The eternal Son becoming the incarnate Son had given the world a perfect Man; the incarnate Son becoming the crucified Son had given to the human race a perfect Saviour. He had been victorious in the wilderness temptation, in the Gethsemane struggle and finally in the Calvary conflict. But now what? He lies buried in a tomb and a stone seals His grave. Has He been conquered at last? Was His victory but a seeming victory? Has the world had bequeathed to it nothing but the example of a sinless, perfect life it is impossible to follow and the memory of a well meaning but futile sacrifice for sin? Will the Author, Preserver and Upholder of all life Himself succumb to death, and will the palm of victory after all belong to him "who has the power of death, that is the devil"? Such will surely be the case if the God-man remains in the grave.

But this is unthinkable. Christ had said that He would not only lay down His life but that He would take it again (John 10:17-18). And He did rise from the dead. Death could never hold Him who had said, "I am *the resurrection*, and *the life*: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

"Death could not keep his prey —  
Jesus, my Saviour,  
He tore the bars away —  
Jesus, my Lord!  
Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah, Christ arose!"

The victory over death was complete.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57, "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, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

The victory of the resurrection gathered up into its embrace all the other victories in His life and death and gave to them meaning and power. The victories of incarnation and crucifixion were merged into THE VICTORY; perfect, powerful, permanent victory over the triumvirate of hell: sin, death and Satan.

### **THE RESURRECTION — THE DIVINE SEAL**

Acts 2:24, "*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*"

Upon the life of the perfect Man and the work of the perfect Redeemer, God, the Father set His divine seal of approval and appraisal by raising the God-man from the dead. Christ Jesus had cried from the Cross, "It is finished," and it was the cry not of

a victim of Satan, but of a Victor over Satan; not of one vanquished by death, but the cry of the Vanquisher of death. In that cry of victory Christ showed that He anticipated His resurrection; He expected the Father to raise Him from the dead. Had He a right to expect His Father so to act? Most assuredly.

To His perfection of life as God's second Man the Father had set His seal of approval both at His baptism and at His transfiguration by opening the heavens and saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Would the Father remain silent now? Would there be no witness to the Father's satisfaction in the all-sufficiency of the Son's sacrifice of Himself upon Calvary's Cross to save men? To Christ's death on the Cross as the perfect Saviour God would set His seal by opening the tomb and raising His Son from the dead, thus expressing in language more eloquent than words His satisfaction with the Saviour's redemptive work and its sufficiency for the sinner's salvation. "Upon all the virtue of His life and the value of His death and the victory of His conflict, God set the seal in the sight of heaven and earth and hell, when raising Him from the dead" (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Crises of the Christ*, p. 364). "The resurrection is the Father's 'Amen' to the Son's exclamation 'It is finished.'"

### **THE RESURRECTION — A SURE PLEDGE**

The body that had been specially prepared for Him in incarnation (Hebrews 10:5), that had been laid down in death upon the Cross (Hebrews 10:10) was now raised and came forth from the tomb.

Matthew 28:5-6, "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: *for he is risen*, as he said. *Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*"

John 20:27, "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and *behold my hands*; and reach hither thy hand, and *thrust in into my sides*: and be not faithless, but believing."

In resurrection as in incarnation He was still the God-man. He arose from the grave on that first Easter morning with the body which He had taken in incarnation, which had been nailed to the Cross in death, which had been placed in Joseph's tomb, which had been preserved from corruption and which after three days had been raised from the dead. In that body He appeared to the disciples proving to them His identity by the nail prints in His hands and feet and the spear print in His side. In that body He ascended to Heaven and sits today at the right hand of the Father receiving the worship of countless multitudes out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation who are redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb slain on Calvary. In that glorified yet scarred body He will live through the ages of the ages, the visible reminder to redeemed sinners "of the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

While the body of the risen God-man was the same body yet it was a changed body. From the truth revealed in Philippians 3:20-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:42-50 it is clear that the body Christ Jesus had in resurrection was a glorified, incorruptible, mighty,

spiritual, heavenly body. The limitations of His earthly life were those of His human nature; the limitations incident to the humiliation to which He had voluntarily submitted. But in the resurrection He threw off all these fetters of the flesh. "His birth marked the voluntary self-limitation of His Godhood in His descent into our race in His incarnation. His resurrection marked His ascent out of these limitations and His return to His former glory. It was the passageway through which He went to the resumption of the unlimited powers of His Godhood" (A. E. Wood, *The Person and Work of Jesus Christ*, p. 56).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the sure pledge of the resurrection of the believer. When comforting Martha about her brother Lazarus who had been dead four days Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, *though he were dead, yet shall he live.*" Just as truly as Christ's prophecy concerning His own resurrection was literally fulfilled will this promise to Martha concerning the resurrection of every believer also be fulfilled. The resurrection of Him who is the Head of the body makes the resurrection of every member of the body not only certain but essential.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, *even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; *afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*"

And as He rose with a glorified, incorruptible, mighty, spiritual, heavenly body, so shall we. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15:49).

Philippians 3:20-21, R.V., "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: *who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory,* according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."

### **THE RESURRECTION — A NEW BEGINNING**

Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: *who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;* that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Through the last Adam God has provided another way of union with the human race and in Him He has made a new beginning. Through the perfection of His incarnate manhood, God's second Man has qualified to become the Head of a new creation, through the victory of His crucifixion He has put an end to the old creation, and now through the power of His resurrection a new order of beings is formed of which He is appointed the executive Head. As firstborn from the dead He becomes the Progenitor of a new race of redeemed men, the Head of a new company of people whose life on earth is to be transformed daily into His image from glory to glory and who are ultimately to share the perfection of His glorification.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as twin events, certain definite issues in the conflict between God and Satan were met and eternally settled. The victory over Satan was fully and finally won which robbed him of the last vestige of claim to sovereignty over the earth or the race. He is hence-forth a usurper and a thief. Jesus Christ gained back all that had been lost and now the earth and all that is therein is His not only by right of creation but by right of conquest.

To the believer in Jesus Christ it means that the sovereignty of Satan over his life is ended and the sovereignty of God begins; that he leaves the sphere of sin, death, darkness and disorder, and enters the sphere of righteousness, life, light and liberty; that he ceases to be a subject in the kingdom of Satan and becomes a subject in the Kingdom of God; that he severs his alliance with Satan's system, the world, and avows his allegiance as a member of Christ's body the Church, to Christ Himself who is its Head. It means, in other words, that the old creation with all that pertains to it ends at the Cross and is buried in the tomb and that a new creation comes forth in the resurrection. It means that the old relationship with sin, self and Satan is altogether annulled and a new union with God in Christ Jesus is made, and that in this new relationship Christ becomes not only the believer's Saviour but his Lord and his Life.

Through His death on the Cross Christ Jesus willed to every man who will take it perfect salvation from the pollution, penalty and power of sin; perfect victory over death both spiritual and physical; perfect release from the bondage of Satan. Through the resurrection from the dead He is appointed by the Father to be Executor of this will; to be the Mediator of the New Covenant; to be the Dispenser of all the blessings and benefactions which were given through grace to all those who have become sons and heirs of God through faith in Him. The resurrection of Christ Jesus is the third span in the bridge of salvation. ([See Diagram 6.](#))

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## Chapter Twelve

### Four Spans in the Bridge of Salvation — Ascension and Exaltation

There remains but one double span to complete God's wondrous bridge of salvation. The God-man, crucified, buried and risen, must go back to His Father in glory and be exalted to the place of honour and power at His right hand. Only then would His work be completed. At the resurrection Christ Jesus was constituted the last Adam and became the Progenitor of a new order of beings but not until His ascension and exaltation could He actually be inducted into His work as Head of the Church. He must first enter into heaven to present the blood of Calvary's Sacrifice to His Father and then be enthroned by God as "the King of kings and the Lord of lords."

**THE HOMECOMING OF THE SON**

In His glorified body the God-man left the earth and passing through the heavens entered into Heaven itself.

Acts 1:10-11, "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*"

Hebrews 9:24, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; *but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*"

Oh! What a homecoming that must have been! Thirty-three years before the well-beloved Son, who through all eternity had been in the bosom of the Father, had left His home in glory to be born in the womb of a virgin. Earth had never held such an One as He and the world not knowing the worth of the precious gift received Him not. But, having glorified His Father on earth and having finished the work which He gave Him to do, the Son now goes Home. He is marred and scarred by His treatment on earth. Hands and feet and brow all tell the story of the crucifixion on Calvary's tree. The precious body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39) is a silent witness to the blood shed on the cruel Cross. Surely heaven had never homed such an One as He. But heaven knew the worth of the treasure it held on that wonderful ascension day and the angelic host, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, praised Him with a loud voice and heaven reverberated with the anthem of welcome that greeted the triumphant Redeemer as He entered its portals.

Psalms 24:7-10, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and *the King of glory shall come in.* Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; *and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.*"

### **THE EXALTATION OF THE SON**

The Father awaited the return to glory of His well-beloved Son that He might bestow upon Him the place of highest honour; that He might exalt Him to the place of greatest power; that He might give Him a name which is above every name; that He might crown Him Lord of all.

Ephesians 1:20-22, "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, *and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all*

*things to the church."*

Philippians 2:9-11, "*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.*"

The exaltation of Jesus Christ meant His enthronement. The eternal Son who once voluntarily had emptied and humbled Himself was now exalted to the throne of God and all power in heaven and upon earth was granted unto Him. The crucified Saviour is now the preeminent Lord.

Matthew 28:18, "*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*"

Acts 2:36, "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*"

### **THE PRESENT WORK OF THE LIVING CHRIST**

There are three tenses in salvation, past, present and future. Three statements may be made regarding the sinner which are apparently contradictory, yet absolutely true; the believer has been saved, the believer is being saved, the believer will be saved. There is a salvation that is to be appropriated in a moment of time by the sinner, that day by day is to be actualized in the believer's life, that some future day will be fully accomplished. The work which the God-man began on the Cross for the sinner He continues on the throne for the saint.

#### **The Divine-Human Mediator**

There is but one way of approach to God whether for sinner or for saint and that is by way of Christ Jesus, the divine-human Mediator. The sinner has no way of access to God for salvation except through Christ.

John 14:6, "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

The saint has no way of approach to God for sanctification except through Christ.

Hebrews 7:25, "*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*"

Whether we wish to be delivered out of the bondage of sin, or whether we desire to enter into the fulness of our glorious liberty as sons and heirs of God, we must do it through Christ. Through the mediation of Christ Jesus we obtain life; through the same mediation we obtain life more abundant. Our eternal inheritance is in Him. All blessings promised under the new covenant are hid away in the God-man. The



glorified Lord is the depository of all the spiritual treasures kept for God's people. He holds them in trust to be bestowed by Him as Mediator when claimed by faith. The representative Man who was on the Cross as the sinner's Substitute is on the throne as his Surety.

Hebrews 9:15, R.V., "And for this cause *he is the mediator of a new covenant*, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, *they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*"

### **The Great High Priest**

Just before Jesus gave up the ghost He cried "It is finished." What was finished? The completion of His work as the Sacrifice for man's sin. He Himself was that Sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:26, "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin *by the sacrifice of himself.*"

But in olden times the sacrifice made for sins had to be ministered by a priest. On the great day of atonement the great high priest alone went into the Holy of Holies to offer the sacrifice for the sins of the people. The sacrifice would have been of no avail had it not been offered by a God-appointed, God-anointed, priest. Christ is the Lamb of God offered as a Sacrifice to put away sin for us. But have we a Great High Priest who can act as minister of the sanctuary and make the Sacrifice for sin avail for our forgiveness, cleansing and renewal? Praise God we have just such a Great High Priest.

Hebrews 8:1, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: *we have such an high priest*, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

Hebrews 10:12, "But *this man*, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down on the right hand of God.*"

Hebrews 4:14, "Seeing then that *we have a great high priest*, that is passed into the heavens, *Jesus the Son of God*, let us hold fast our profession."

The Man who was the Sacrifice also offered the sacrifice.

"It is finished" — "He sat down."

The priest in olden times always stood; he never sat because his work was never finished, "for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). So in those sacrifices there was a remembrance year by year of sins (Hebrews 10:3). But when "this man had offered one sacrifice for sins forever," then "*He sat down.*" A perfect Sacrifice for sin had been made; the Saviour's work was done.

Hebrews 7:26-27, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the

heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

But in order that the precious blood of the Lamb might avail for the forgiveness, cleansing and renewal of the believer a God-appointed, God-anointed high priest is needed. Such a Great High Priest Jesus Christ became. In virtue of His perfect life on earth, in virtue of His perfect sacrifice upon the Cross, in virtue of His finished work for man's redemption, the God-man sits at the right hand of God as our Great High Priest. He is there as our Forerunner, having made a blood-sprinkled path from earth to heaven — even into the Holy of Holies — for sinful men (Hebrews 6:20; 10:19). He is there as our Representative before God, "a merciful and a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." While down here on earth He was tempted in all points like as we are so He is a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:14-15). He knows our trials, afflictions, disappointments, difficulties, sufferings and sorrows, for He has met and passed through them on earth. Therefore He is able now to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

#### *The Sympathetic Advocate*

God cannot condone sin nor company with it whether that sin is in the sinner or in the saint. Sin always, everywhere, separates from God. When the believer sins, his fellowship with God is broken, but he cannot restore himself any more than the sinner could save himself. As the sinner needed a Saviour to open a way to God through redemption so the saint needs an Advocate to keep that way open through restoration.

Such an Advocate must be one who sympathetically understands the awful power of sin and himself has felt its tremendous pressure upon spirit, soul and body, and yet one who has been uncompromising in his refusal to yield to it in thought, word or deed.

Such an Advocate must be one who is able to have access moment by moment to God and one who has a remedy to offer God for the things he attempts to make right.

Such a righteous and effectual Advocate the believer has in Christ Jesus. Such an efficacious remedy for cleansing and restoration Christ has in His shed blood.

1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. *And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*"

1 John 1:6-7, "*If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth Us from all sin.*"

As the sinner is cleansed once for all from the guilt of sin through the precious blood of Christ, so the saint in the same way is cleansed daily from the defilement of sin.

### **The Faithful Intercessor**

God was not satisfied with delivering the sinner from the old sphere of death, darkness and disorder but He wished him to claim and use to the full his possessions and privileges in the new sphere of life, light and liberty. He is not content merely to have a man saved but He purposes to have him saved to the uttermost. God is able not only to lift the sinner from the lowest depths of life on the plane of the natural but also to exalt the saint to the highest heights of life on the plane of the spiritual. For this He has made ample provision in the faithful intercession of the exalted Lord.

Romans 8:34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, *who also maketh intercession for us.*"

Hebrews 7:25, "*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*"

The intercession of the exalted Son is the capstone of His finished work. What He made potential through His crucifixion on the Cross He makes actual through His intercession on the throne. "The intercession of the exalted Christ for the saint is the projection into experience of the saving act of the crucified Saviour for the sinner. It is by His work from heaven that we appreciate His work upon earth."

In His last prayer with the disciples on earth, recorded for us in John 17, He unveils the nature and the content of His High Priestly intercession for all believers. He prays for their safety and their sanctification; He anticipates the oneness of life which He as Head will have with them, as members of His Body; and prays for His perpetual presence in them that it may mean the perfection of His life in theirs. "Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us," praying that God's eternal purpose which He wrought out in the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of His Son may be perfectly realized in the life of the believer in his complete deliverance from bondage and in his full acceptance of Christ.

In the ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ God completes the fourth span in the bridge of salvation.

Life on the Highest Plane  
Vol. 1: The Person and Work of Christ

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **The Crowning Work of Jesus Christ in Salvation**

There remains yet one thing to be done to perfect God's gracious plan of salvation. A connecting link between the Saviour in Heaven and the sinner on earth is needed. The finished work of Christ by some means must be made applicable to and operative in the souls of men. A way must be provided whereby the life of the crucified Saviour, now enthroned as Lord in Heaven, may be communicated to, and maintained in, the believer on earth.

## **TWO WONDROUS GIFTS**

Upon the sinner God has bestowed a wondrous gift, that of His Son as Saviour; upon the believer God has bestowed a second wondrous gift, that of His Spirit as Sanctifier.

Galatians 4:4-6, "But 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*. And because ye are sons, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and *if a son, then an heir of God through Christ*."

God sent forth His Son that the sinner might enter the family of God as a child. God sent forth His Spirit that the child might enter into the fulness of his inheritance as an heir. God gave His Son to make salvation *possible for us*; God gave the Spirit to make salvation *real in us*. God gave His Son that we might have life; God gave the Spirit that we might have life abiding and abounding.

## **GOD'S CROWNING WORK**

Without the Holy Spirit's work all that was accomplished through Christ's death, resurrection and exaltation would be of no avail. One cannot study thoughtfully the Lord's last conversation with His disciples on earth recorded in John 13-16 without seeing that He teaches most clearly that the sending of the Holy Spirit from the Father upon His return to glory was to be the crowning work in His salvation of men. Let us turn then to these chapters for a study of this truth.

There were many things that He longed to say to His disciples that last night but they were unable to bear them (John 16:12). A few things, however, He must make clear. One was the kind of life He expected them to live. It was to be both an abiding and an abounding life. His life was to be to their life what that of the vine is to the branch. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and that fulness was to be made theirs until they were "filled with all the fulness of God" (Colossians 2:9-10; Ephesians 3:19).

As He talked along about this wonderful abiding and abounding life, He said, "But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart " (John 16:6). No doubt He was watching their faces and saw a confused, troubled look as He spoke of going away from them and yet of expecting them to live any such life as this. He had told them that it was to be a life characterized by peace, joy, power, fruitfulness, friendship and love, yet it was to be interwoven with suffering, tribulation, persecution, even possible death by violence. How could they ever hope to live such a life if He went from them when in those three years in which they had enjoyed the blessing and helpfulness of His personal presence there had been so much of envy, criticism, discouragement, cowardice, fear, and unbelief in their lives?

His quick sympathy understood what they feared to express and He hastened to comfort them by saying: "I will not leave you comfortless: *I will come to you.*"

What a strange thing to say — to tell them in the same breath that He was going away from them and yet coming to them. But He explains further: "Yet a little while, and *the world seeth me no more; but ye see me.*" He was to be with them and seen of them but in a way unknown and invisible to others. It must be, then, in a spiritual rather than in a physical presence. Still they were perplexed and could see no real benefit in His leaving them. Then He said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, *the Comforter will not come* unto you; but if I depart, *I will send him* unto you." But what would be gained by the going of Jesus Christ and the sending of some one else in His place? Had it not been very wonderful to have the Lord with them on earth, talking and praying with them, teaching and leading them, letting them work with Him, showing them by the life He lived and the work He did how they ought to live and work? Yes, it had been very wonderful but not altogether successful. While there had been much of joy in fellowship with Him yet there had been also much of discouragement. He said so much the meaning of which they could not grasp and even what they did understand they so often failed to obey. He had been much with them but they had not grown like Him in the three years. What gain then could it be to have Him go away so that even His bodily presence was denied them? He does not leave them without answering every questioning of their sad, perplexed hearts.

John 14:16-17, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may *abide with you for ever*: even the Spirit of truth . . . for *He dwelleth with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU.*"

Oh! here is something entirely new: wholly different from any of God's dealings with men before. God the Spirit had been with men and He had come upon men but never had He been in men as a perpetual presence. Now it would seem that through Jesus Christ's going back to the Father by way of the cross and the tomb and the clouds an entirely different relationship was to be established between God and men, a relationship more close and intimate than anything man had experienced through all the centuries. "We will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). God, the righteous, holy One, was to live in men in actual presence. How could such a thing be? The Lord Jesus tells us.

John 14:20, "At that day ye shall know that *I am in my Father*, and ye in me and I in you."

John 17:21, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

How would the Son who was leaving to go back to the Father in Heaven and to live at His right hand be able to live also in Peter, and in James, and in John on earth? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Here indeed is the crowning work of the Lord Jesus.

John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I

depart, *I will send him unto you.*"

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

John 15:26, "*He shall testify of me.*"

Jesus taught clearly in these words that the chief mission of the Holy Spirit in being sent forth from the Father to dwell in the believer was that He might make the presence of the risen, glorified, living Lord an actual spiritual reality. He also taught them that the Holy Spirit was to be both the sole and the sufficient messenger of spiritual truth and the medium of spiritual revelation. In other words all that they would ever know of, or receive from, their risen Lord was to be communicated by and through the Holy Spirit. Without Him there would be no means for the presence and power of the risen Christ to be manifested in their lives, and no way for them to realize in their spiritual experience the blessing and benefit gained for them by Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit was to be the middleman between Heaven and earth. The salvation that had come from the Father through the Son would be applied by the Spirit. By the power invested in the Holy Spirit the believer would be lifted to the plane of the spiritual man and his life maintained there.

### **THE PROMISE OF CHRIST FULFILLED**

Christ had promised that, if He went away, the Holy Spirit would come and His promise was fulfilled literally. He died and rose again. He met the disciples individually and collectively several times, revealing Himself to them as their risen Lord. He gave them a last commission; then He repeated His promise and commanded them to wait for its fulfilment.

Luke 24-49, "*And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*"

Acts 1:4-5, "*And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*"

Jesus Christ then ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:10-11). They waited according to His command (Acts 1:12-14). God's time was fulfilled. The day of Pentecost came (Acts 2:14). The promise of the Father was actualized in the descent of the Holy Spirit in baptism upon the waiting group of believers.

## **THE TWOFOLD ASPECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S BAPTISM**

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples had a double import: it accomplished two definite, distinct things.

First, the Holy Spirit came upon each believer filling him with Himself. Through this baptism the exalted Christ took up His abode in the individual believer where He was enthroned as Lord and appropriated as Life. Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit the abundant life of the living Lord was manifested in power in each believer.

*Acts 2:4, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."*

Second, the Holy Spirit came upon the whole group of believers and baptized them into one body, the Church. Through this baptism they were united to Christ, its Head, and to one another as fellow members of the body of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit's descent on the day of Pentecost the exalted Christ was installed as Lord over, and instilled as Life into, the Church.

*1 Corinthians 12:12-14, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."*

## **THE RESULT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S BAPTISM**

Through His death, resurrection and exaltation, the Lord Jesus not only removed the penalty of sin but He broke its power. Through union with Him by faith He had made potential for the believer on earth the same life of victory, power and holiness, which He lived in Heaven. This life was to be communicated to and maintained in each believer through the incoming, indwelling and infilling of the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter, James, John and all the other believers who tarried in the upper room were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The question is bound to rise in our hearts, "Did that baptism make any difference in their lives? If so, what difference?" Even a casual comparison of the record of the life of the disciples before and after Pentecost will convince any one that a marvellous change had been wrought. These men had been in almost daily companionship with Jesus during the years of His public ministry. They had been taught deep truths by Him, they had shared His wonderful prayer life. They had lived under the spell of that matchless personality day by day. He had been both their Teacher and their Example for three years.

But witness the failure, defeat, and sin of their lives as it is laid open to our gaze in the Gospels! See the jealousy, ambition, selfishness, pride, self-seeking, self-assertion, self-love, weakness, and fruitlessness. In spite of their fellowship with the Holy One who tried in all possible ways to help them they remained very largely what they were before they followed Him.



And why was this true? Because He was only living with them, one without, working upon them by His word and personal influence. But what a change was wrought when on the day of Pentecost, through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Christ came down into those men to take the perfect possession, the complete control, and the unhindered use of their whole being. Self was dethroned and Christ was enthroned as Lord. Christ became the Life of their life.

A fourfold fruitage was manifested in their lives immediately. They became men of *purity*. "God, which knoweth the hearts, giving them the Holy Spirit, purified their hearts by faith." A mighty inward change first was wrought. The Spirit of God is a holy Spirit and He can only dwell in a holy place. So His primary work is always the cleansing of the innermost recesses of the life. "Be ye holy for I am holy" is God's mandate to the saved soul. When the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit He first purified them, displacing pride with humility; selfishness with love; cowardice with courage; carnal with spiritual; worldly with heavenly; human with divine; temporal with eternal.

They became men of *power*. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." This promise abundantly was fulfilled in them. Inward purity begat outward power. The book of the Acts is one unbroken record of the mighty power of God the Holy Spirit coursing through purified channels. "Rivers of living water" flowed through those first apostles and believers into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

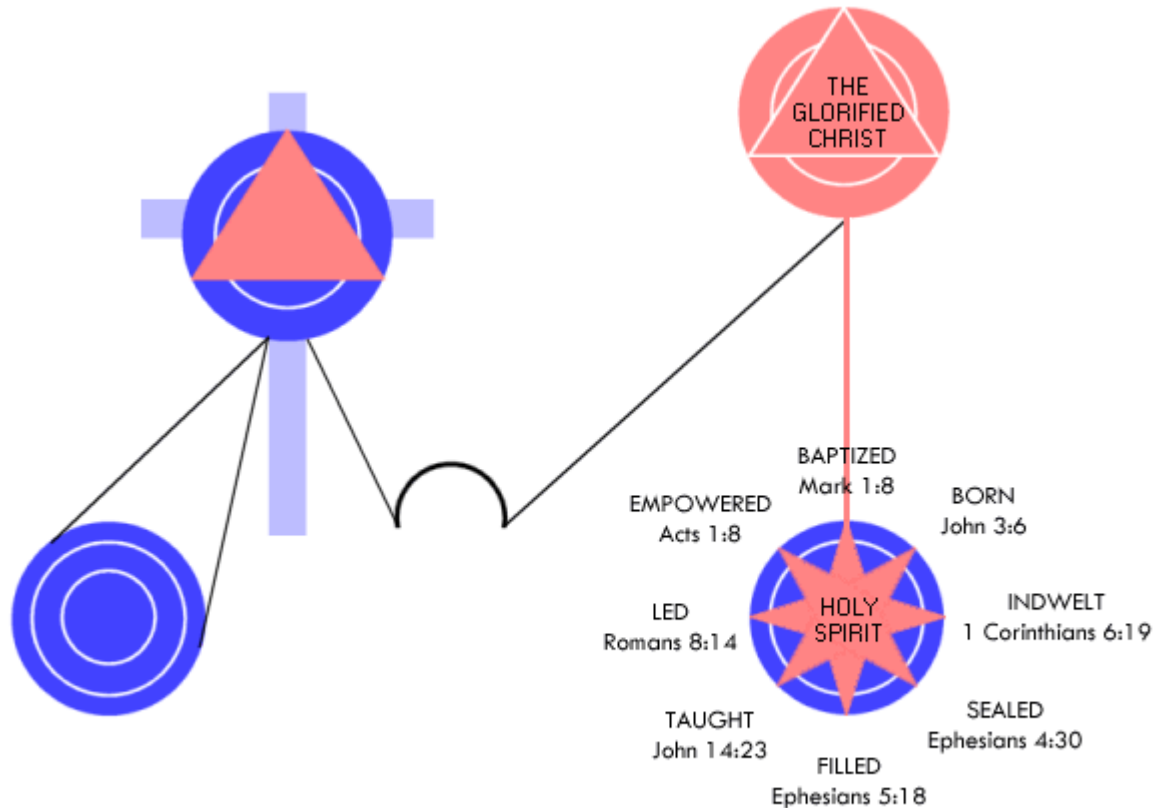
They became men of *passion*. One and all they gave themselves to the winning of souls. Their own hearts, all aglow with fervent gratitude and adoring praise to Him who loved them enough to give Himself for them, were kindled into a flame of passionate desire to bring others into the joy and peace and security of a personal, saving relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. They became men of one passion — "This one thing I do" animated their lives.

"Oh! for a passionate passion for souls  
Oh! for a pity that yearns!  
Oh! for a love that loves unto death!  
Oh! for a fire that burns!  
Oh! for a prayer power that prevails!  
That pours itself out for the lost;  
Victorious prayer in the Conqueror's name,  
Oh! for a Pentecost

They became men of *prayer*. Communion with God through prayer, and cooperation with God through intercession in making the finished work of Christ operative in other men's lives, became their chief delight and constant occupation. The book of the Acts is one continuous record of answered prayer. All their wonderful works were begun, continued, and ended in prevailing prayer.

The repeated impression made upon the student of the book of the Acts is that through the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost those first believers were changed from carnal into spiritual Christians and that from that time on they purposed to live their lives on the highest plane. What life on the highest plane was to them is defined aptly and adequately in a description used repeatedly in connection with them, "They were filled with the Holy Spirit."

Through our studies thus far we have seen that in the finished work of Jesus Christ, the eternal, incarnate, crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Son crowned by the sending forth of the Holy Spirit, God has made all-sufficient provision for lifting any and every person from the deepest depths of life on the natural plane to the highest heights of life on the spiritual plane. (See Diagram 7.)



**Diagram 7: The Holy Spirit**