

## **"God is Love."**

### **No. II.**

"Order is Heaven's first law." God has a plan, a systematic way of doing his work. All human plans laid in harmony with God's plan are perfectly safe and certain of success. God's work reveals himself, His wisdom, power and love. He can be known in no other way. As "the tree is known by its fruit," the fountain by the stream, the child by his doings, and the man by his life; so God's great Gift, and the work executed by Him, reveal the fullness of His love for man. God's plan is one of both revelation and salvation. He reveals himself as a means of eternal life to man. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. Jesus Christ is most emphatically the way of God's approach to us; the channel through which light and salvation flow within our reach, and also the way of our approach to God. He is thus the Mediator – "the way, the truth and the life." The glory of Christ's position and work, and our absolute dependence on Him, will be appreciated if we bear in mind that all we know of God is revealed in Christ, and "no man cometh to the Father except by Him." Christ in every stage is called the "Word." Of the pre-existent state it is said, "In the beginning was the Word." John 1:1. By whom God spoke all things into existence, and for whom also they were created. Of the first advent – more properly the Incarnation – it is said: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,...full of grace and truth." Ver. 14. And at His future glorious epiphany – "the manifestation of the Sons of God," [Rom. 8:19] – as the Bridegroom and the Bride "glorified together, [ver. 17,] when at the head of that glorious "army in heaven," He goes forth "conquering and to conquer," He still is called "The Word of God." Rev. 19:13. The "Word" is an expression proceeding from God, and going forth to man, and in all the ages of redemption, He is as a stream from the Eternal

Fountain; proving that "the mercy of the Lord endureth forever;" and as the "Arm of the Lord" made bare and extended to help, until "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Isa. 52:10. "I am the Truth," said Jesus. The Word is the Truth spoken or expressed. The Bible is God's word, because it reveals the Lord Jesus Christ, and the great plan of salvation. It contains and reveals Christ, as He contains and reveals the Father; hence, "he that heareth my words and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, &c." John 5:24.

The Lord Jesus is the Spirit of the Word, [2 Cor. 3:17,] the golden thread of revelation from end to end, even in the writings of Moses, [John 5:46-47,] but hidden by the letter as a veil from the unbelieving Jew, [2 Cor. 3:13-18,] and from all others who cannot "discern spiritual things," "the deep [covered] things of God."

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14. The ability to discern spiritual things must depend on the extent to which our minds are controlled by the spirit of God, [ver. 11.] Christ is not only the golden thread of revelation, but the foundation on which the structure of the Word is built, and of the plan of the ages.

The poet must have had a glimpse of the grandeur of the plan and of Christ's relation to it when he penned the hymn entitled "Rock of Ages."

"By whom, also, He made the worlds" [aionios, ages]. Heb. 1:2. The plan and all things were formed not only by Him, but for Him. [Col. 1:16.] The plan of salvation is truly the plan of the ages which God formed for his Son; and to know God and Christ fully, we must know their plan of work. The work is moved by and expresses their love; therefore, the better we understand the plan and work, the more we will appreciate the love. God's love known – "shed abroad in our hearts" – produces love to Him in return. "We love Him because He

first loved us." 1 John 4:19. And as God's love shows itself in his works, so will our love show itself in our works. "If ye love me keep my commandments." John 14:15. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, &c." John 15:10. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment: That ye love one another, as I have loved you." [V. 11-12] The Lord cares for our joy and comfort. He asks only what is for our good – "reasonable service," and yet He asks all – "your bodies a living sacrifice. Rom. 12:1. Self denial, under the Lord's direction, is the surest means of happiness. "Perfect love casts out fear." 1 John 4:18. Fear is not a good motive to obedience. Loving obedience is an expression involving both heart and life. The unfaithful servant who hid his Lord's money said, "I feared thee." He believed the lord unjust, because he was unjust himself. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." Luke 19:20-22. As fear was the cause of unfaithfulness, so love is the cause of faithfulness. The one that knows God and His plan of the ages, cannot be afraid of the Lord, nor believe Him unjust. "Acquaint, now, thyself with him and be at peace." "Oh, taste and see that God is good, whoso trusts in Him is blest. That some love the Lord and serve Him, who know but little of God or his plans, there can be no doubt; and even babes in Christ are dear to the Master; He carries the lambs in his bosom like a tender shepherd. But we are not always to remain babes, but grow up into Christ as men of full stature. Eph. 4:13-15. "Leaving the [first] principles, let us go on to perfection." Heb. 6:1. We would not discourage any, however weak or ignorant, who sincerely love the Lord; [and none of us but may yet learn more,] but we would encourage all to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 3:18. In order to grow we must be fed, and with the "bread of God." "I am the Bread of Life." "I am the Truth," said Jesus, and also, "Man shall not live by bread alone, [natural,] but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Oh, that we all may search for the truth, eat it, digest it, grow strong, and be faithful

in the work of the Lord. Until we are sure that we know all that God has revealed in Christ and His word, there can be no stopping place, or time to stand still. Walk, run, strive, fight, press on in the path "that shineth more and more, even unto the perfect day," [Prov. 4:18,] keeping our eyes on "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." [Phil. 3:14.] To appreciate which, it will be necessary to know God's love as revealed in the plan of the ages. J. H. P.

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WHOSOEVER would be sustained by the hand of God, let him constantly lean upon it; whosoever would be defended by it, let him patiently repose himself under it.

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