

PART I.
WHY EVIL WAS PERMITTED.
A DIALOGUE.

B. – GOOD evening, Brother A.: if you are at leisure I would like to have some conversation with reference to the Bible.

A. – I am at leisure, my brother, and such a conversation should be of interest and profit to both of us. Have you struck a new vein of precious metal in the mine of truth?

B. – Well, no; I cannot say so. The fact is, I am somewhat perplexed to know whether the Bible is really a mine of truth or not. There are many beautiful truths taught in the Bible which commend themselves to my judgment, and if I could only have my mind clear on some points, I would gladly accept the whole. It seems, too, that there must be some way out of my difficulties, if I could only find it, for surely the book is stamped with a wisdom higher than human, and my difficulty may arise from a failure to comprehend it more fully.

A. – Well, my brother, it gives me great pleasure to meet with an honest inquirer after truth. You are anxious, then, to find the connecting links in the great chain which binds the interests of humanity to the throne of God. We believe that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that the Spirit will guide us in the understanding of it. If it should please him to use me as his mouth-piece it will be a great privilege, and if I can render any assistance it will afford me pleasure. [R250 : page 2]

B. – Well, can you explain why evil was permitted? If God is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, why did he permit his fair creation to be so marred by sin? After creating our first parents perfect

and upright, why did he permit Satan to present the temptation, or why allow the forbidden tree to have a place among the good? Could he not have prevented all possibility of man's overthrow?

A. – I see just where your difficulty lies, and I think I can make it very plain to you. It pleased God for the joy it gives him to dispense his goodness, and to exercise the attributes of his glorious being, to create various orders of intelligent beings. Some he has endowed with greater capacity than others; but each he made perfectly adapted to his sphere. We are acquainted with many forms of life in our world, but above all others stands man, the masterpiece of God's workmanship, endowed with reason and intelligence superior to all others, and given the dominion over all. He was made upright and perfect; God pronounced him "very good" – a perfect man – physically, mentally, and morally, yet unacquainted with evil and lacking experience. Had evil never been placed before him he could not have resisted it, and consequently there would have been no virtue nor merit in his right-doing. I presume I need scarcely remark here that not the fruit of the tree but the act of disobedience caused man's fall.

B. – But could not God have made man unchangeably perfect?

A. – No; to have done so would have been to make another God. Unchangeableness is an attribute only of an infallible, infinite being – God. He who cannot err must, of necessity, be all-wise, all-powerful, and consequently eternal.

B. – I had never thought of it so.

A. – If an intelligent being is to be made at all, he must be made liable to change; and, as he was created pure, any change must be from purity to sin. He could not even know the meaning of good unless he had evil to contrast with it. He could not [R250 : page 3] be

reckoned as obedient to God unless a temptation to disobedience were presented, and such an evil made possible.

B. – But could not God, with whom we are told "all things are possible," have interfered in season to prevent the full accomplishment of Satan's designs?

A. – You say "all things are possible" with God. I trust you remember that it is all possible things that are possible with him. "It is impossible for God to lie." – Heb. 6:18. "He cannot deny himself." – 2 Tim. 2:13. He cannot do wrong. He cannot choose any but the wisest and best plan for introducing his creatures into life; and we should bear in mind that the fact of God's not interfering with the introduction and development of sin is one of the very strongest of reasons for believing that evil is necessary and designed ultimately to work good.

C. – Brother A., may I interrupt you here to ask, why, if it was proper and wise that Adam should have a trial under the most favorable circumstances, as a perfect man, should not all his posterity have a similarly favorable trial? We all know that we are born with both mental and physical ailments and imperfections. Why did not God give us all as good a chance as Adam?

A. – If you or I had been in Adam's place, we would have done just as he did. Remember, he had known God only a little while. He found himself alive – perhaps God told him he was his Creator, had a right to command his obedience, and to threaten and inflict punishment for disobedience. But what did Adam know about the matter? Here was another creature at his side who contradicted God, telling him that he would not die from eating the fruit; that God was jealous, because eating of this fruit would make him a God also. Then the tempter exemplified his teaching by eating of it himself, and man saw that he was the wisest of creatures. Can you wonder that they ate? No; as a reasoning being he could scarcely have done otherwise.

C. – But he should have remembered the penalty – what a terrible price he must pay for his disobedience – the wretchedness [R250 : page 4] and death which would follow. If I were so placed, I think I should make more effort to withstand the tempter.

A. – Wait, Brother C.; you forget that Adam, up to this time, was totally unacquainted with wretchedness and death. He could not know what wretchedness meant; he never had been wretched. He did not know what dying meant; and, if you or I had been there, controlled by an unbiased judgment, we would have done just as Adam did. The reason you think you could withstand better is, that you have had experience with evil, and have learned, in a measure, what Adam up to that time had not learned in the smallest degree, – viz., to know good from evil.

C. – O, I see. Then it is because we would have done just as Adam did; that God is justified in counting us all sinners, that "by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners," and "by the offence of one, all were condemned" (Rom. 5:18,19), and so "the wages of sin (death) passed upon all," and through or "in Adam all die."

B. – Do I understand you to say that God does evil that good may come?

A. – By no means. God did no evil, and he permitted it only because it was necessary that his creatures should know good from evil; that by being made acquainted with sin and its consequences – sickness, misery, and death – they might learn "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and having tasted that the bitter "wages of sin is death," they might be prepared to choose life and to understand the wisdom and love of God in commanding obedience to his righteous laws.

B. – But did not God implant in his creature that very thirst for knowledge which led him to an act of disobedience in order to gratify

it? Does it not seem, too, that he wanted him to become acquainted with evil, and, if so, why should he attach a penalty to the sinful act, knowing that a knowledge of evil could be obtained in no other way?

A. – We can see readily that a knowledge of evil could be **[R250 : page 5]** obtained in no way except by its introduction; and, remember, Adam could not have disobeyed if God had given no commandment, and every command must have a penalty attached to give it force. Therefore, I claim that God not only foresaw man's fall into sin but designed it: it was a part of his plan. God permitted, nay, designed man's fall; and why? Because, having the remedy provided for his release from its consequences, he saw that the result would be to lead man to a knowledge, through experience, which would enable him to see the bitterness and blackness of sin – "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and the matchless brilliancy of virtue in contrast with it; thus teaching him the more to love and honor his Creator, who is the fountain and source of all goodness, and to forever shun that which brought so much woe and misery. So the final result is greater **[R251 : page 5]** love for God, and greater hatred of all that is opposed to him. The best armament against temptation is knowledge.

C. – Your reasoning is clear, forcible, and, would seem to me, plausible, were it not that this experience and knowledge came too late to benefit the human family. Adam failed from want of knowledge and experience to maintain uprightness of character – his posterity, though possessing that knowledge and experience, fail to attain uprightness from lack of ability occasioned by his sin.

B. – I can see no objection to your view, that evil was permitted because necessary to man's development and designed for his ultimate good, were it not as Brother C. suggests – mankind will never have an opportunity to make use of the experience and knowledge thus obtained. But, Brother A., what did you mean a few minutes

since when you said God had a remedy provided for man's release from the effects of the fall before he fell?

A. – God foresaw that having given man freedom of choice, he would, through lack of knowledge, accept evil when disguised as an "angel of light;" and, also, that becoming acquainted with it, he would still choose it, because that acquaintance would [R251 : page 6] so impair his moral nature that evil would become more agreeable to him and more to be desired than good. Thus permitted to take his own course, man brought upon himself misery and death, from which he could never recover himself. Then the voice of infinite love is heard: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This is Christ Jesus, and the death of Christ for man's sin was a part of God's plan as much as man's fall. He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." His death for our sins was purposed by God before man fell; yes, before man was created.

B. – I begin to see a harmony and beauty connected with the introduction of evil which I had not suspected. May we not reasonably say that God could not have displayed those qualities of his nature so attractive to us – mercy and pity – nor could his great love have been made so apparent had not the occasion for their exercise been presented by man's necessities?

A. – I am glad that you have suggested this thought. It is true, that though "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy," yet neither of these would have been seen had there not been a sinner requiring them; and while "God is love," and always has been the same, yet it is true that "in this was manifested the love of God, and hereby perceive we the love of God, because he (Christ) laid down his life for us." And do you not see that in the arrangement of the whole plan the wisdom of God is beautifully shown? Let me say further, that as we proceed, we shall find God's justice made to shine because of the introduction of evil. God might have told his creatures of these

attributes, but never could have exhibited them had not sin furnished an occasion for their exhibition.

B. – I am becoming anxious to see the outcome. You have suggested that Christ is the remedy for man's recovery from the effects of the fall, and that it was so arranged and purposed by God before creating the race, but you have not shown how the recovery is effected.

A. – I am glad that you have not lost sight of the real object [R251 : page 7] of our conversation. The answer to this question will involve the consideration of two points: – First, What was the penalty pronounced and inflicted? and, Second, What was the remedy, and how applied? May I ask you to state in Scripture language what penalty God pronounced on Adam's sin?

B. – I believe it reads, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But he did not die for nine hundred and thirty years.

A. – You quote correctly. The marginal reading will help you over the difficulty of his living nine hundred and thirty years. It is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew text: "In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die," – i.e., from the moment he should disobey God, death would have dominion over him – would have a claim and right to him, and would begin its work. It was only a question of time how soon it should lay him low. Elements of disease infested all nature with which he came in contact, since separated from Eden and its trees of life.

We all are in a dying condition, partially dead; mentally, morally, and physically. From the moment of birth, and before it, we have been in the clutches of death, and he never lets go until he has conquered. Man, by means of medical aid, attempts resistance; but, at best, it is but a very brief struggle. Adam, because physically perfect, could offer great resistance. Death did not completely conquer him

for nine hundred and thirty years, while the race at the present time, through the accumulated ills handed down through generations past, yields to his power on an average in about thirty-two years.

C. – We are, then, so to speak, overshadowed by death from the cradle to the tomb, the shade increasing each moment until it is blackness complete.

A. – Yes; you get the thought. As David expresses it in the twenty-third Psalm: "I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." The further we go down into this valley the darker it becomes, until the last spark of life expires. **[R251 : page 8]**

B. – I understand you to believe that diseases of the various kinds are but the mouths of death by which we are devoured, since we were placed within his reach by Adam's sin?

A. – Yes; every pain and ache we feel is evidence not that death will get hold of us, but that he now has us in his grasp. Adam and all his race have been in death ever since he disobeyed.

C. – We frequently speak of death as the "Angel God has sent," "the gate to endless joy," etc., and yet I confess I could never regard it except as an enemy, and such it would really seem to be.

A. – Nowhere in Scripture is it represented as our friend, but always as an enemy of man, and consequently the enemy of God, who loves man; and we are told that "for this purpose Christ was manifest, that he might destroy death and him that hath the power of death, – that is, the devil."

B. – If death is the penalty for sin, has not mankind paid that penalty in full when dead? Might he not be released from death the moment after dying, yet fully meet the demand of justice? A. – "The wages of sin is death," – not dying, but "death" – forever. As well say

that a man condemned to imprisonment for life, had received the full penalty in the act of going into prison, as that man received his penalty in the act of going into death. By disobedience man fell into the hands of Justice, and, though God is merciful and loving, there can be no warfare between his attributes. Mercy and love must be exercised in harmony with justice. "God is just," and "will by no means clear the guilty." Man was guilty, and must therefore be dealt with by justice. Justice cries, Your life is forfeited, "dying thou shalt die." Man is cast into the great prison-house of death, and Justice, while locking him in, says: "Thou shalt by no means come out thence until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

B. – Do I express the same idea by saying that man forfeited his right to life by his disobedience, and, consequently, God, in [R251 : page 9] justice, recognizing and enforcing his own law, could not permit him to live again unless he could meet the claims of justice?

A. – The idea is the same. Man is the debtor, and unless he can pay the debt he cannot come out of the prison-house of death – cannot have life. He cannot pay this debt, and consequently cannot release himself. But man's weakness and helplessness gives occasion for the display of God's mercy and love in Christ Jesus, for "When there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save," God devised a way by which he could be both just and merciful; and so, "while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

C. – How for them? His death does not prevent men from dying.

A. – It does not prevent their dying, but it does prevent their continuance in the prison-house of death. He came to "open the prison doors and set at liberty the captives." This he does, not by opposing God's justice, but by recognizing it, and paying that which is due. He has a right to set those prisoners free. In his own death – the just for the unjust – he ransomed us, as it is written, "I will ransom (purchase) them from the power of the grave;" "I will redeem them from death;"

"for ye were bought with a price, even the precious blood (life) of Christ."

C. – I understand you to mean, that as Jesus came into the world by a special creative act of God, he was free from the curse which rested upon the balance of the race, therefore not liable to death. As the second Adam he was tried, but came off conqueror. "He was obedient even unto death;" but his right to life not having been forfeited, either through Adam's sin or his own, death had no claim upon it. He, therefore, had an unforfeited life to offer Justice as a ransom for the forfeited life of mankind.

A. – Yes, as he himself said, "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." – John 6:51. He must have a right to continuance of life, else he could not give it. He did not conquer nor overthrow Justice, but recognizing the justice of the law of God [R251 : page 10] in the forfeit of the sinner's life, he purchased it back with his own, and thereby obtained the right to "destroy death," – the [R252 : page 10] enemy who for a time is used as the servant of Justice.

B. – Then Justice accepted the life of Christ as a substitute for the sinner's life. But it seems unjust to make the innocent suffer for the guilty.

A. – It would be unjust to make or compel such suffering, but "Christ gave himself for us." "He for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." C. – But how could the life of one purchase the life of many?

A. – By the rule of

SUBSTITUTION.

As Adam was substituted for the race in trial, and through his failure "death passed upon all men," and all were counted sinners, even before birth, so the obedience of death in Christ justified all men

to a return to life. Paul so expresses it in Rom. 5:18, [Em. Diaglott]: "For as through the disobedience of ONE man, the many will be constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the ONE, the many will be constituted (reckoned) righteous;" and, "as through one offense, sentence came on all men to condemnation (condemning them to death), so also, through one righteous act, sentence came on all men to justification of life," justifying their living again.

B. – Shall we understand, then, that the resurrection of the dead is optional or compulsory on Justice?

A. – Christ having "tasted death for every man," it is certainly compulsory on Justice to release the prisoners held for sin. Christ's sacrifice having been accepted as "the propitiation (settlement) of our sins, and not of ours (believers) only, but also for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD," all must go free, because God is just to forgive us our sins." – 1 John 1:9.

B. – Does this imply universal, eternal salvation?

A. – No, it implies the saving or salvation of all men from the Adamic death, but as many of them will be liable to the "second [R252 : page 11] death," on account of their own sin, it cannot be eternal salvation. The second Adam will eventually restore to the race all that it lost by the first Adam's sin.

C. – Was everlasting life one of the things possessed by Adam before he sinned, and which he lost in death; and is it to be restored to mankind through Christ's ransom?

A. – Yes; his continuance of life, if obedient, is implied in the threatening of death if disobedient. Adam, when created perfect, was possessed of a perfect body, and with perfect arrangements for the continuance of the perfect life, in the trees (woods) of life, in the garden. This kind of life would have lasted forever had he continued obedient, hence was everlasting life, conditioned only on obedience.

This was lost, and is to be restored to all mankind, – viz., perfection of being, or life and perfect provision for its everlasting continuance in harmony with God.

C. – Then this salvation cannot be what Paul refers to, saying, "the gift of God is eternal life." A. – Natural (human) life – everlasting – was originally a gift from God, but its restoration is not, strictly speaking, a new gift; rather it is an old gift returned. Life once possessed was lost, and is to be restored because purchased – paid for – by the death of Christ. The restored race, brought back to where they were before the fall, will have the advantage of knowing from actual experience the character and results of sin, which plunged our race in ruin. Then, with the knowledge of sin and its miserable results, gained during the present time, they may be considered superior to all temptation and sin, and, therefore, not liable to death. They will enjoy everlasting life in the same sense that Adam possessed it before the fall, and that angels now possess it, – viz., the right and means of continuing their life (by eating, etc., Psalm 78:25), as long as they continue obedient to God's laws. This is not the same, however, as Immortality – the new gift of God [see "The Narrow Way to Life." – **page 134**] which the Scriptures assert to be possessed by God our Father [**R252 : page 12**] and our Lord Jesus Christ only, and promised to those of the Gospel church, who overcome and become his Bride. This new gift was never known of before this Gospel age, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." – (Eph. 3:5; see also 1 Cor. 2:10, and 1 Pet. 1:12.) It "is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death (obtained the right to do so by giving "his life a ransom for all"), and hath brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel." – 2 Tim. 1:10.

Yes, our Lord made both things possible, the restoration of Life to mankind in general, and the attainment of the superlative degree of life – Immortality – by those who overcome and become his bride. It is of this great prize set before believers of this Gospel age that Paul speaks, saying: "God having provided some better thing for us." (Theirs was goad and grand, but the bride's portion is better.) – Heb. 11:40.

The character and exclusive application of this promise of the divine, incorruptible, immortal principle of life to the "little flock," the "bride," is shown in the following and other Scriptures, – 1 Tim. 6:16: God "only hath immortality:" a life incorruptible, independent of any support, eternal (the word eternal merely expresses duration, nothing more: God is both eternal and immortal. – 1 Tim. 1:17.) In John 5:26, Jesus gives his own definition of immortality, claiming that the Father gives it to him. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." He thus became a partaker of the divine (Jehovah's) nature, a son of God – the "only begotten" on that highest plane. And it is to partake of this same gift of God – "glory, honor, and immortality" – that his Bride is called. According to his promise she is to become "partaker of the divine nature," also – the same high plane of sonship – "joint heir with Jesus." She is to have within her "a well of water (life) springing up" (Jno. 4:14), while the rest of mankind may come to the fountain to drink. – Rev. 7:17, and **[R252 : page 13]** 22:17. Paul says of the overcoming church, "This mortal must put on immortality." – 1 Cor. 15:53.

Thus we see that the new gift is that held out for the bride – immortality – divinity: while that which the world will get will be the restoration of the former life. When the world is restored to perfect human life, possessing the knowledge of good and evil, as perfect obedience will be expected of them as was required of Adam.

C. – You seem to think there are no conditions to salvation, while the Scriptures mention them frequently.

A. – There are conditions laid down for attaining the high calling to joint-heirship and dominion with Jesus and immortality, but none for the recovery of the race from the fall, except the righteousness and acceptableness of the substitute.

C. – If ransomed, why do they remain in death, and others die, since Christ has paid the price?

A. – But the price is not yet fully paid. To have a clear understanding of God's plan, we must recognize the distinction which he makes between the world in general and the Church, or called-out ones of the present time. God loves the world, and has made great and rich provisions, as we have seen, for their coming in his due time, to a condition of perfection and happiness, but, in the meantime, while they are getting their experience with evil, God calls out "a little flock," to whom he makes "exceeding great and precious promises," conditioned on their living separate from the balance of the world – "overcoming the world," – viz.: that they may become "children of God," "partakers of the divine nature," the "bride," and "joint heirs," with his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (anointed).

With her Lord, the wife becomes a part of the Christ – the anointed "body." She now fills up the measure of the afflictions of Christ, which are behind. – Col. 1:24. With him, she bears the cross here and when every member of that body is made "a living sacrifice," has crucified the fleshly human nature, then the ATONEMENT sacrifice will be finished, and the bride, **[R252 : page 14]** being complete, will enter with her Lord into the glory which follows, and share with him in the "joy that was set before him," and which he set before her – of blessing all the families of the earth, thus completing the AT-ONE-MENT between God and the redeemed race. And, "as in the first Adam (and Eve – they being counted as one – Gen. 5:2)

all die, so in Christ (Jesus and his bride made one – Eph. 2:15) shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22. Jesus, the head, atoned for his body, his bride, and his righteousness is imputed to her. Being thus justified, and considered holy in God's sight, she is permitted to have fellowship with him in his sufferings that she may also share with him in his glory. [See Tract No. 7, Work of Atonement – Tabernacle Types.]

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us (believers), that we should be called the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with JESUS CHRIST, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with him." – Rom. 8:17.

B. – It is very clear to my mind, that a false idea of substitution has obtained among Christian people, from a supposition that it represented God as a vindictive, vengeful tyrant, angry because man had sinned; refusing to show mercy until blood had been shed, and caring not whether it was the blood of the innocent or the guilty, so long as it was blood. I doubt not many Christians have been led to look upon substitution as a God-dishonoring doctrine, even though there are many scriptures which are found difficult to otherwise make use of, as, "He tasted death for every man;" "My flesh I will give for the life of the world;" "Without the shedding of blood (life) there is no remission [R253 : page 14] of sins;" "Redemption through his blood;" "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "We were reconciled to God by the death of his son;" and many other texts to the same effect. It was not by his leaving the glory which he had, nor by his keeping the law, nor by his being rejected of the Jews, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, nor by his resurrection, [R253 : page 15] nor by work he has since accomplished, but, "by his DEATH that we are reconciled to God."

I now see him as mankind's substitute, suffering death, the penalty which the justice of God had inflicted upon us. I can see "the

exceeding sinfulness of sin" in God's sight, the perfection of his justice, and his great wisdom in so arranging it all, that man's extremity was made the occasion for the manifestation of "the great love wherewith he loved us" when "he gave his only begotten Son," and "laid upon him the iniquity of us all," as well as the love of Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, (buy back to us all we had lost by iniquity). I feel to exclaim with Paul, "O! the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God."

C. – Do you understand the Scriptures to teach that all mankind will reach and maintain the perfection of life which Adam lost – which you called "everlasting life?"

A. – It would seem as though such love, when seen, would beget love and obedience; but we are assured there is a second death, and while those who become subject to it, will not compare in numbers with the saved, yet, there will be some, who will not reach perfection, even at the end of the thousand years, who being incorrigible will be cast into the lake of fire (the second death.)

God made provision before our creation for the recovery from the first death, (the present Adamic death,) but, if after experience with evil and a knowledge of good, they do not appreciate good, they will die for their own sin (not Adam's). There is no recovery from the second death – Christ will not die for them again. Justice and love can do nothing more for them.

C. – Do you not understand that some are condemned to the second death during the Gospel Age?

A. – Yes, in 1 Jno. 5:16, and in Heb. 6:4-6, we are informed that some commit this sin now, but from the conditions mentioned, they are evidently few. Only those who have been brought to a knowledge of God and his good word and have **[R253 : page 16]** received the

Holy Ghost – in a word, Saints are the only ones who could commit it – those who have already received all the benefits of ransom from sin, etc., and who know it. If these, being washed, like the sow, willingly go back to the wallowing in the mire of sin, they commit the sin unto death.

I do not mean simply backsliding, but open apostasy and rejection of Jesus' work of ransom and purchase as explained by the Apostle.

And now there is another thought I would like you to notice: Jesus not only ransomed his bride from death, but as her head becomes her leader, example, forerunner, and captain of her salvation to the spiritual condition and divine nature. The death and resurrection of our Lord are inseparably joined: the death was necessary as our ransom, to release us from the condemnation of sin, and to justify us before God; the resurrection was necessary that through our Lord's guidance, grace and strength bestowed through the Spirit we might be able to walk in his footsteps as he hath set us an example – "being made conformable to his death."

B. – I see a force, then, in Paul's expression, Rom. 5:10: "Reconciled by the death – saved by the life." His death justified us to human life, but his example and aid enable us to "become partakers of the divine nature" and life immortal.

C. – If justice could not let mankind go free from death, how could Jesus be permitted to live if he became man's substitute? Must not his life be forever forfeited?

A. – It was forever forfeited – he never took the same life again. He was quickened (made alive) to a higher life by the Father. He was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" to a higher plane, a spiritual body. As we shall be, he, our leader, was "sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body." Had he risen a fleshly being,

with fleshly life, we could not go free. It would have been taking back our "ransom" – our "price." As Paul says, "He took upon him the form of a servant (flesh) for the suffering of death." He had no need of [R253 : page 17] it further; he left it. "He made his soul (life) an offering for sin:" "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." – Jno. 6:51. It was given forever. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. 10:12, having received a higher life.

B. – This change, then, accounts for his acting so strangely after his resurrection – appearing in different forms – as the gardener to Mary, and "afterwards in another form to two of them," etc. His appearing in their midst, the doors being shut, and anon vanishing out of their sight. I often thought it peculiar. But did not his fleshly body disappear from the tomb?

A. – Yes; "His flesh saw not corruption." What became of his flesh, I know not any more than I know what became of the various bodies in which he appeared after his resurrection, and of the various fleshly bodies in which angels appeared at various times. "They saw not corruption;" but, remember, it was not the atoms of matter which composed the body – (and which are continually changing) – these atoms did not sin, and were not cursed nor forfeited by the fall. It was the flesh life, and Christ's laying down his flesh life, effects the ransom.

C. – Now, another point: Are all our sins, actual as well as imputed, forgiven?

A. – While all are justified from Adam's sin unconditionally, yet, where knowledge of right is possessed, obedience is expected as far as they are able to obey. Failure in this respect is the occasion for their being beaten with many or few stripes in the age to come; while the "little flock" who now believe into and are baptized into Christ, become members of his body, are by their faith justified from all

things (Acts 13:39), will not be beaten with stripes in the world to come. True, they now receive "chastisement whereof all are partakers," but not as a penalty; only as the "rod and staff" of Christ, the Shepherd, to guide his sheep.

Thus the sins of the "Church of the First-born" are passed **[R253 : page 18]** over, (not imputed), and she is justified, not from death only, but "from all things."

This is beautifully pictured in the law by the Passover. Wherever in that night the lamb was eaten, and his blood sprinkled, the first born was passed over – spared. – Ex. 12. So, during this night – the Gospel age – Christ, our Passover (lamb) is sacrificed, and we "keep the feast." – 1 Cor. 5:8. We feed on our Lamb with some of the "bitter herbs" of affliction to sharpen our appetite. All such are passed over. This type shows the special value of Christ's death to his body, "The Church of the First-born." Thus, "God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." – 1 Tim. 4:10. C. – Does not the race get back, in the second Adam, spiritual life?

A. – Certainly not; Adam was not a spiritual but a human being, consequently had human life and powers, which were "very good." Believers of this Gospel age only are warranted by the word of God in expecting a change from human to spiritual conditions – spiritual bodies with spiritual powers "like unto the angels," and "like unto Christ's glorious body." This spiritual condition will be ours "in the resurrection." Those who hope to obtain this new nature are influenced by those hopes and promises during the present life, and endeavor to live in harmony with that new nature. These are said to be "begotten of the Spirit through the word of truth that they should be (at birth – resurrection) a kind of first fruits of his (God's) creatures." – Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4. Because of this begetting we speak of them as already spiritual beings, though really such in embryo only. Those of our race not begotten of these promises, etc., will never be

spiritual beings, but as we have seen will be restored to human perfection.

C. – I have heard frequently your views of restitution, and saw some force and considerable beauty in them, but I never before saw how absolutely certain man's restoration to life is. I see now that the same justice of God, which could in no case clear **[R253 : page 19]** the guilty, could not permit man's release from death until the price of his ransom had been paid. The very purity of this justice, as well as the love of God in providing the ransom, assures us that the penalty or price being paid, every man must ultimately be released from death. And, Brother A., from one of your remarks I get a beautiful thought, – i.e., That the world's redemption from sin and restoration from death, has been awaiting for 6000 years the coming and work of THE CHRIST (head and body). For over 4000 years it awaited the coming and sacrifice of the Head, and for nearly 2000 years it has also been awaiting the completion and sacrifice of the body. When the body is complete, sacrificed and united to the Head, then follows the glorious restoration of the fallen race. Oh, how grand and glorious it seems! How like a God of infinite wisdom and love.

B. – Yes, yes; it lifts a load from my heart, as I think how God's word is its own interpreter, and shows forth his great, loving plans for all our race. And yet, we can scarcely realize its truth, though thus supported by his Word and commended **[R254 : page 19]** of our judgment. I presume it is because from infancy we have been bound by false ideas.

A. – And how it seems to unfold itself now, just at the time most needed, as the offset of the arguments of infidels; to give confidence and strength to God's children, who are being forced out of, and separated from the worldly-minded churches of today. I consider it a strong evidence that the Gospel age is ending, and that, therefore, this message of "Restitution," not due during the age, is put into our

mouths now. Thus, God is gradually revealing himself through his plans, and the more we know of him, the more we will love and honor him.

C. – One other thought I would like to suggest. Paul speaks of being made a spectacle to angels. Can it be that angels are learning the dreadful effects of sin, from seeing man's experience with it, and the love, mercy, justice, and power of God, in rescuing man from it? The thought presented to my mind is, that this terrible fall, with all its bitter consequences, together **[R254 : page 20]** with this glorious plan of the ages for the restoration of the fallen race, and the introduction of the new creation, of which Jesus is the head, is intended for the instruction and benefit of all God's intelligent creatures, as well as for mankind.

A. – A very good thought. We know that angels are intensely interested in watching the unfolding of the plan. We read in 1 Peter 1:12, "Which things the angels desired to look into," and again (Heb. 1:14), "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation?" Probably they are learning for the first time the immensity of God's love, and wisdom, and power – the exceeding beauty of holiness, in contrast with sin, and the lesson of the necessity of entire obedience and complete submission to the will of the one great Master and Father of all, as was beautifully exemplified in his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. – What we have seen relative to evil in man – how and why it came – when and how it will be eradicated, its usefulness, yea, necessity, as a protection against future sin, etc., seems not only satisfactory, but a grand solution of a question which has long perplexed me and many others of God's children. Now let me ask, can we go further and learn God's plan relative to Satan, the tempter?

It is a fundamental law of God's universe, governing all his creatures, that "The soul (being) that sinneth, it shall die" – that, in a

word, God would supply life to no creature that would not live in harmony with his righteous laws: and though in conformity to this universal law, all the rebel angels were from [R254 : page 21] the moment of rebellion doomed to die, and must ultimately die, yet God, who we are told "makes the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder (of man's wrath) he will restrain, has acted upon the same principle with the rebel angels. He uses them as his agents in the sense that they accomplish (probably unknowingly) a part of his plan, and give mankind the knowledge of evil and its bitter results – sickness, pain, and death of mind and body. And because of this work which they are designed to accomplish, God, the Father, "who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16) – life in himself – the fountain of all life continues for centuries to supply life to these, condemned to death.

I presume that the rebel angels thought that they were immortal beings, and that while God could give life to any creature, he could not take it away again, and probably with pride engendered by this thought of their own hold on life and their supposed inherent greatness, they may have meditated and attempted "a usurpation" of God's authority.

B. – We can see the folly of presuming that he who created and gave life, could not by the same power remand any of those beings again to the same elements from which he created them.

A. – Their rebellion was followed not by death, but by an expulsion from God's presence [to "Tartarus" – which probably signifies our earth]. This we can imagine a source of trial to the sinless angels. If God had said sinners should die, and these having sinned did not die, it would appear as though God had been misrepresenting his power. He had power to cast them out of his presence, but apparently lacked power to destroy them. Here was apparently a rival government nearly as strong as God's, and any who loved evil might desert Jehovah's hosts and join those of Satan.

A. – Our only source of information on the subject is the Bible, and its accounts, while brief, are to the point, and furnish us all requisite information. Scriptures refer to evil spirits as "legion," or a multitude under a head or prince called Satan. They were at one time angels of God. 2 Peter (2:4) and Jude (6) speak of them as – "The angels who kept not their first estate" (of purity and sinlessness) whom God "cast down to Tartarus and delivered into chains of darkness."

When man was created and placed in Eden, a marvel of perfection and beauty, but on a different plane of being from any previous creation, and with one power possessed by none other – the power to propagate his own species, can we wonder if **[R254 : page 22]** Satan felt disposed to capture this wonderful creation for allies and subjects? This he did attempt, and approached as a friend who was truly interested in them, and desired their welfare, saying – Why not eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," and be very wise? They said that God had charged them not to eat of it, and had cautioned them that if they ate they would die – lose life and return to the dust from whence they were taken. Ah, my dear friends, says Satan, be not deceived; God has told you an untruth; let me assure you, that you will "not surely die;" you are immortal beings and can no more die than God himself. Let me convince you that God is deceiving you, because the Lord God doth know that you would become as gods, knowing good and evil; therefore, he seeks to prevent your progress and knowledge by this threat of death. Then Satan ate and died not, and this seemed to corroborate his statements and to make God a liar. I doubt not that Satan thought he told the truth when he said man had immortality and could not die. His own experience had evidently been such as to lead him to suppose God could not withdraw life when once given. And the fact that Adam, after sinning, was shut out from fellowship and communion with God,

but did not instantly die, seemed but a corroboration of Satan's own previous experience.

It was not long, however, until death made its appearance, and gave evidence that man was "mortal" (Job 4:17), proving the word of God true and Satan's statement false. We can imagine the awe and terror of the rebel angels as they saw lifeless Abel, and realized that their theories as to the endlessness of life were thus proved false. As they began to see the power of God to destroy as well as to create, they realized that the penalty against them as sinners (death) would sometime be fulfilled. That they now realize that their end is destruction, is evidenced by the words of the legion to Jesus – "We know thee....Art thou come to destroy us?" – Luke 4:34.

Though now convinced of God's power, they are still his enemies, and use their power to oppose God's plan, etc.; and they **[R254 : page 23]** are permitted to exercise great power, and seemingly to triumph over God's plans and people, but it is only for a time, thank God, and their power is limited; so far can they go and no further.

The untruth which deceived in Eden – "Thou shalt not surely die" – has been the teaching of the devil through all generations since. He has taught it to all heathen peoples, and among those who are God's children – Christians – he has succeeded in getting many to believe him instead of God. But since death has come, he offsets the logical conclusions by saying that the real being is not dead; that merely the house has died, and that the being himself you cannot see, that he is immortal – indestructible. Upon this falsehood he has built up in the minds of Christian people the belief in a place of endless torment for the supposed endless being, which doctrine is a blasphemy on the character of Jehovah and a contradiction of his word, which repeatedly declares that "the wages of sin is death" (not

life in torment), and "the soul (being) that sinneth, it shall die" (not live in misery).

By these doctrines and teachings Satan causes the statements of God's word to sound like mockery when it declares – "God is love" – "God so loved the world," etc. But while Satan may have supposed that he was opposing Jehovah by making the pathway which leads by Faith to glory, rugged and steep and hard to climb, yet we can see that God is still making use of evil to accomplish his plans; for the "narrow way," and careful walk and great faith are essential elements in the development of the little flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom" – "The Christ (anointed) of God."

Every truth of God seems to be opposed with a specious error, and every error of Satan's which we receive is a hindrance to our reception of some truth of God; and likewise every word of God's truth which we get a firm hold of, repels at once the error of the enemy. Let us give the more earnest heed to the word of God "which is able to make us wise unto **[R254 : page 24]** salvation" (the great salvation promised to the overcomers – the Bride).

Soon Satan's power must wane. When in God's plan evil has served its designed purposes, the Lord will take to himself his great power and reign (Rev. 11:17), and the rule which Satan now bears over those who do his will, will be overthrown, and a new age ushered in, the law and controlling power of which will be righteousness – a great contrast, indeed, with "the **[R255 : page 24]** present evil world" (age). This taking of control is described by Jesus in a parable – Mark 3:27. And again, in Rev. 20:2, it is represented in a pen picture as a binding of Satan with a strong chain of power for a thousand years. When bound he has not yet met his doom – destruction – but will merely be restrained from deceiving the nations until the end of the millennial age. Then all mankind having come to know good and evil, and having been restored to perfection of being, should and could

resist all temptation, and if Satan were again to present temptation, they should oppose it and him, else they are as guilty as he. And so we read, Satan is again permitted to try the restored perfect human family, who now know by experience what sin is, and what God's love is; and, strange as it may seem, a number follow and join the rebellion of the angels – yet we cannot doubt that the number will be small in comparison with the numbers who shall live in harmony with God.

The agency of evil being then ended, all evil will be wiped out; and "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess (Jesus) to the glory of God the Father." – Phil. 2:11. As Paul declares (writing of Christ and his body-church): "The very God of peace shall bruise Satan (crush the serpent's head – destroy him) under your feet shortly." – Rom. 16:20. Paul again declares that the destruction of Satan and the evil which he has caused, was the object of Jesus' coming into the world and dying – "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, – that is, the devil." – Heb. 2:14.

John also adds his testimony that "For this purpose the Son **[R255 : page 25]** of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" – all evil (1 Jno. 3:8).

C. – How wonderful it seems! To think that God has for over six thousand years permitted not only men, but angels, to misunderstand his great wisdom, power, and love that in due time those attributes might shine with ten-fold brilliancy. This furnishes us a key, too, to our Christian experience. How often, while endeavoring to walk in Jesus' footsteps, and to overcome evil with good, we are misunderstood and our purposes maligned. "The world knoweth us not because it knew him not." – 1 Jno. 3:1.

B. – I want to say to you before leaving, that I am much rejoiced to see clearly as I now do, why God permitted evil; that it was not,

that he had elected ninety to hell to each one chosen for glory, and introduced evil as a pretext to justify their damnation: nor, on the other hand, was it because God could not help its introduction, and lacked wisdom to foresee, and power to avert it; but that he arranged for its introduction, and our recovery from it as the embodiment of WISDOM, LOVE, and MERCY.

A. – What a privilege is ours, dear friends, to be living during the fulfillment of the "Seventh Trumpet," during which "the mystery of God shall be finished." – Rev. 10:7. As the mystery and cloud of error and evil begins to roll away, and we get a glimpse of our Father's loving plans, how it rejoices and refreshes our hearts to see him as, indeed, a God of Love. Let us lift up our hearts and rejoice, as we see that the glorious Millennial day is dawning, and that soon –

"His truth shall break through every cloud
That veils and darkens his designs."

In the light of the unfolding plan, Cowper's lines seem almost an inspiration: **[R255 : page 26]**

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break

In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his word in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

page 26

May we not with the angels sing "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men:"

"Tell the whole world these blessed tidings,
Speak of the time of rest that nears;
Tell the oppressed of ev'ry nation,
Jubilee lasts a thousand years.

What if the clouds do for a moment
Hide the blue sky where morn appears:
Soon the glad sun of promise given,
Rises to shine a thousand years.

A thousand years earth's coming glory –
'Tis the glad day so long foretold:

'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,
Prophets foresaw in times of old."
