

## SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN.

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all, which they chose.... And they bear children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown." – Gen. 6:2,4.

The Scriptures not only point us to the future age and call the spiritual government of Christ which shall then exist a "new heavens," and earthly society and institutions under it a "new earth;" but the present spiritual rulership [under Satan, "the prince of this world"] and earthly institutions under it are termed "The present evil world," dispensation or epoch. Moreover, we are informed that the present dominion of evil has not lasted forever, but that it was preceded by a still different dispensation or epoch spoken of as "the world that was before the flood," which also had a heavens or spiritual ruling power, and an earth, or condition of men subject to that spiritual dominion.

The three worlds mentioned by Peter (2 Pet. 3:6,7,13) designate these three great epochs of time, in each of which, God's plan with reference to men has a distinct and separate outline, yet each is but a part of the one great plan which, when complete, will exhibit the divine wisdom, though considered separately these parts would fail to show their deep design.

Since that first "world" (heavens and earth," or that *order of things*,) passed away at the time of the flood, it follows that it must have been a *different* order from the present, and hence the prince of this present evil world was not the prince of that which preceded this – of the world or dispensation before the flood.

Several scriptures seem to throw light on God's dealings during that first dispensation, and we think give a further and clearer insight into his plan and purpose as a whole. The thought suggested by these

is, that the first world (the dispensation before the flood) was under the supervision and special ministration of the angels; that these were man's governors and overseers commissioned to communicate God's will and to rule over the fallen and degenerating race, which, because of sin, needed this government.

That angels were the rulers of that epoch is not only indicated by all references to that period, but may be reasonably inferred from the Apostle's remark when contrasting the present dispensation with the past and the future. He endeavors to show both the righteousness and the enduring character of the future rulership of the world, saying, "The world to come hath He not put in subjection to the angels." No, it is put under the control of Jesus and his joint-heirs, and hence it shall not only be more righteous than the present rule of Satan, but it shall be more successful than was the previous rule by the angels. – See Heb. 2:2,5.

In their original estate all the angels seemed to possess the ability to appear in earthly forms – Satan appeared to Eve as a serpent; other angels frequently appeared as men, thus performing their ministry, appearing or disappearing, as the work demanded.

It was at this time it seems, that the fall of some of the angels occurred. It is a common supposition, though we think without foundation, that the fall of Satan's angels occurred before man's creation. We are told that Satan was a murderer [man killer] from the beginning. (Jno. 8:44.) Certainly not the beginning of his own existence, for every creation coming from God's hand is perfect, nor can we think any other beginning referred to than man's beginning, in Eden. But so far as we are informed he was alone then and had no followers or angels.

The ambition of Satan to become a ruler seems to have developed as he beheld the first human pair with their procreative powers. He probably reasoned that if he could obtain the control of this man he should have the dominion over all his offspring, and be in power and

influence above others, a rival of Jehovah; and his growing ambition said, "I will be *like* the Most High." – Isa. 14:14.

Measurably successful, Satan gained a great influence over the race, but not complete, for in competition with him was the great company of angels, who, as guardians, instructed and ruled mankind for a time in harmony with the will of God. But presently came a great degeneracy among those rulers of men. Man's corruption was contagious, and some of the angels left *their own* habitation, or condition as spiritual beings, keeping not their first or original estate. They *misused* the powers which they possessed of assuming a human form, and became of a reprobate and licentious mind, copying after degenerate man, and started a new race of men in the world, as the above text (Gen. 6:2,4;) affirms.

Some have endeavored to apply this scripture to two classes of men – one class more righteous than the other, called "sons of God," but such a position is untenable, for it is not a sin for one *man* to take *for a wife, another man's* daughter. Marriage among men is never condemned as sinful in the Scriptures. Again, if it were merely a union of two classes of the same race, why should the offspring be "GIANTS," and specially "MEN OF RENOWN?" If the righteous and the wicked marry to-day, are their children therefore giants or more renowned men?

Through the deterioration of several hundred years, mankind had lost much of its original vigor and perfection of mind and body, but with the angels it was different. Their powers were still perfect and unimpaired, hence it is clear that their children would partake of that vitality and much more resemble the first perfect man than those around them, among whom they would be giants both in physical and mental strength.

Those angels which *kept not* their first condition, but sought the level of *sinful men*, and left their own habitation, or *spiritual condition*, God placed in age-lasting chains. That is, God restrained or

limited their powers, taking from them the power and privilege of appearing in an earthly form, human or other. Hence, though we know that they thus did appear before the flood, there is not one instance recorded in which they have been able to free themselves from this restraint or chain since. On the contrary, the angels who left not their first estate are not so restrained, and have appeared frequently *as men*, as a flame of fire and as a pillar of cloud, etc., as recorded in both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Having become depraved in their tastes and being given over to a reprobate mind, and being debarred from all association with God and his works and his plans, these fallen angels have no longer any pleasure in things on the spiritual plane, but crave association with depraved mankind and a participation with him in sin. How wise and kind the Almighty hand which has restrained their power and influence over men, by preventing their *personal* intercourse. Now, they may indeed enter and act through any who *invite* their companionship, but no more can they do. Thus far shalt thou go, saith the Almighty, but no farther.

Some of this class, possessed by devils, Jesus and his disciples met in their ministry. Out of one he cast a *legion of devils*, (Mark 5:1-15). Anxious in some manner to become associated with humanity, yet unable to assume human form because restrained, when they found a man willing to have such company, a legion crowded into him, thereby making him a maniac. Even when they perceived that Jesus would release the man from their possession, they in despair requested as a favor that they might be permitted to inhabit and use the bodies of a herd of swine near by. But the swine were crazed thereby, and madly rushed into the sea.

Jude (vs. 6,7,) gives conclusive evidence on the subject, and clearly shows the nature of the sin for which the fallen angels were condemned and restrained, when, after mentioning the angels who sinned, he says, "*Even as Sodom and Gomorrah...IN LIKE MANNER giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh.*"

That God deprecates any mixture or blending of human and spiritual natures, and designs that each should keep its own original or first estate, we need scarcely remark is clearly taught here. (See also, Lev. 18:23, and 20:15,16.) And that our race as it exists to-day, coming through Noah, is purely Adamic stock, and contains no mixture, is shown by the expression – "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and *perfect in his generation*," – i.e., not contaminated in the manner before described. – Gen. 6:9.

Glancing back, then, we see the first epoch under angelic control, and the result, man's continued degradation, and degrading influence upon some of the angels. The angels were utterly unable to accomplish the great work of man's recovery. Doubtless they were anxious to do it, for they sang and shouted for joy at his creation. And God let them try it, and it was doubtless part of their trial and discipline, but sadly they failed. Some joined the ranks of evil and the rest stood by and witnessed the terrible course of sin. Later we find them still interested and desiring to look into the plan which God has since been working out, and ever ready to do his bidding in our service. (1 Peter 1:12.) Thus was proven both to men and angels the futility of angelic power to save men, though they thus showed interest.

In the beginning of "this present evil world," notwithstanding Noah's endeavor to serve God and to teach his posterity to follow his example, and the exhibition of God's anger at the deluge, the tendency was still downward, and soon the wickedness of Sodom brought its destruction. Mankind was bent on an evil course, and God permitted them to take it. Then the ministration of angels, except to the few of God's children, was withdrawn.

In this second dispensation God permits the world to select and obey the prince of its own choosing, to feel his galling yoke and to realize the real character of evil, while He is selecting from among them a little flock, whose desire to do the will of God has led them to sacrifice the human interests and present things, to share as joint-heirs

with Christ the glories and honors of the new ruling power (new heavens). And when the prince of this world is cast out, and he whose right it is shall take his power and reign, then in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God has now demonstrated to all his creatures that *his* plan is the only one which could accomplish the great work; and his plan has, ever since the fall, been gradually and quietly developing, and in due time will bear abundant fruit unto eternal life. It selects and tests first of all the "little flock," the Royal Priesthood and then reaches out to lift up and restore all who will accept the favor upon God's conditions.

### **THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.**

"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 [in] spirit. By which also, [in addition to this work done for us] he preached to the *spirits* in prison; which sometime [before] were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." – 1 Pet. 3:18-20. *See Diaglott, foot note.*

A satisfactory interpretation of this Scripture has long been sought, and but few have found a solution perfectly consistent and satisfying even to themselves. But in view of the truth gleaned from the suggestions of the preceding article, the above statements of the apostle Peter become luminous.

The two views of this passage commonly held we state first, and then give our present view of it.

The most common view is, that during the time that Jesus was entombed he was off on a missionary tour preaching to the antediluvian sinners who were suffering torture in a place called hell.

If its advocates would consider it, they would find that their interpretation favors a view of future probation for the antediluvians, a

thing which they strenuously oppose. For if Christ preached to them it must have been for some purpose, and surely it was not to merely mock and deride them; and consequently he must have preached a message of hope – a part of his blessed "good tidings of great joy." And if there is a future probation for the antediluvians, why not accept our position as correct – that in Christ "*all* the families of the earth shall be blessed?"

This is the objection which consistency would urge against this view, from the standpoint of those who hold it. But if we view it from the Scriptural standpoint, and with the correct idea of death, we must reason that if Jesus was really dead during those three days, as the Apostles declare, then he could do no preaching; for "the dead know not anything," (Eccl. 9:5), and "there is no work, nor device, [R993 : page 4] nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." (Eccl. 9:10.) Secondly, If Jesus had been an exception to the rule, and could have preached, the antediluvians could not have heard, for certainly they have no wisdom, nor knowledge, in the grave. Hence this view is found generally unsatisfactory and out of harmony with the Scriptures.

The second view, and the one which seemed most reasonable to us until the considerations of the preceding article threw light upon this scripture also, is to refer the preaching to that which Noah did under the direction of the Spirit of God to the antediluvians, who at this time were imprisoned in death. The objection to this view is, that the preaching was not to men, nor to the spirits of men, but to *spirits*, spirit beings; and the preaching was not done by Noah, nor by the Spirit of God, but by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It seems very clear therefore, that the *spirits* are those spirit beings who were disobedient during the days of Noah, and whom God therefore imprisoned or restrained in some of their former liberties and privileges, even "those angels who kept not their own principality, but left their own habitation [or normal condition] he has kept in perpetual

chains, [restraints,] under thick darkness, for the judgment of the great day." Jude 6. – *Diaglott*.

This interpretation seems to meet all the circumstances of the case thus far. Now we inquire, In what way could Jesus preach to these during the time he was dead? We answer that it is not *so* stated. It was by the *facts* that he preached, as we sometimes say that "actions speak louder than words." It was by his sufferings, death and resurrection that the preaching was done. Thus, as Jesus went from step to step in his work, *his course* was preaching a good sermon to those angels who once had been placed in control of man, and had themselves fallen instead of lifting up mankind. In Jesus they saw exemplified obedience even unto death, and its reward – resurrection – to spiritual being of the divine nature. Such was the great text, and the lesson from it is stated by the Apostle in verse 22, viz., that Jesus was now highly exalted and given a name [title] above every name, that he was "gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God [the position of highest favor]; ANGELS and authorities and powers being *made subject to him*." They knew Jesus before he left the glory of the heavenly condition and became a man. They knew the object of his self-sacrifice as a man. They saw him obedient even unto death, and then that his high exaltation came as a reward (Phil. 2:9). They must have felt keenly their loss through disobedience, being cut off from communion with God, restrained as unworthy of former liberty and communion with the purer minded of mankind, and their own future an unsolved mystery. We can but imagine that sorrow and chagrin filled their hearts as they contrasted their course of disobedience and its results, with Jesus' obedient course and its grand results. We can fancy them saying, Would that we had realized before, as fully as we now do, the wide contrast between the results of obedience and disobedience. Would that we might have another trial: with our increased knowledge, our course would be very different.

A clear distinction should be borne in mind, as between Satan and these angels. Satan evidently sinned against great light, so that infinite



wisdom finds no place to do more for him. His was not a temptation to sin from bad example in others, as was the case with the "angels who sinned" in the days of Noah, being led in to evil by their contact with fallen man; for Satan is the father of lies and was a sinner prior to man's fall, and was man's tempter. With reference to Satan nothing is stated in Scripture to indicate a future trial; but, to the contrary, it is expressly stated that he is to be "*destroyed.*" Heb. 2:14; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:10.

Here we start the inquiry: Is it possible that there may be probation for these spirits in prison who were formerly disobedient in the day of Noah, being led into sin through man's bad example? We answer that God's loving care over and for man, while we were yet sinners, and his impartiality, would lead us to hope that he might as well have some provision for the spirits imprisoned alive, as for mankind imprisoned in death. Though because of the different penalties upon the two classes the means of recovery may not necessarily be the same in all particulars: for instance, these angels not being condemned to death, need not be redeemed from death.

If those angels which sinned are to have a future trial – during the day or age of judgment [or trial], which is expressly stated, it follows that there is hope for them. If *then*, under the able instruction and assistance of the glorified church, they forsake sin and lay hold upon righteousness, they shall be accounted worthy of everlasting life and happiness.

Since we find no Scripture statement contradictory of this, no statement telling of their destruction, we have reasonable ground of hope for them, and may search further for Scripture statements favoring that hope?

We find but two statements apparently contradictory; The first reads: "Art thou come to destroy us?" (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Matt. 8:29). This shows that these imprisoned spirits had in mind destruction as their final doom, but it no more proves that their suppositions were correct, than the fact that the so-called "Orthodox" believe that nine-

tenths of humanity will be everlastingly tormented, proves that to be so. The fact is we find Satan, who taught men to thus blaspheme God's character through misrepresentations of his plans, was the master and chief over these cast-down spirits; and evidently he had misrepresented Jehovah's plans to the imprisoned spirits as he has to men. He is the father of lies.

The second text (Matt. 25:41), mentions "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This cannot be used as an argument against a hope for a probation for the imprisoned spirits, for though by force of circumstances and restraint from any other service, they are now Satan's angels – messengers or servants – yet they may not always be such, if an opportunity were granted for them to return to God's service and be angels of God. This passage relates to the "lake of fire," or destruction, into which, at the close of the Millennial age, all are to be cast, who are out of harmony with God. Satan will be of those cast into that everlasting destruction, and with him all who do unrighteousness or have pleasure therein – all of whom, *spirits or men*, are reckoned to be on his side, his angels or messengers – evil doers, shall be cut off from life. To cut off such and such only, was God's plan from the beginning. The *wilfully* wicked and not the merely ignorant, misled, blinded or deceived are meant when it is said, "All the *wicked* will God destroy."

### **THE PROBATION OF ANGELS.**

The above considerations naturally suggest the inquiry, Will those "spirits in prison," "those angels which kept not their first estate," and who received such a powerful lesson from the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, ever have an opportunity to profit by those lessons? will they ever have a chance to repent of their sin, to leave Satan's service, and return to loyalty to God?

If at first we thought the Scriptures were silent on the subject, we have found that to be a mistake, and when God speaks we may reasonably conclude there is something profitable for us to learn.

Hence let us give ear that we may learn whatever our Father deems expedient to communicate.

Jude (verse 6) informs us that those angels which committed fornication and went after strange flesh "*also*" "in like manner" to the Sodomites (verse 7), God is keeping under restraint, (their penalty or punishment) "unto the judgment of the great day." The "great day" is the Millennial Day, and mankind is also waiting for this judgment [*krisis* – trial]. Peter's testimony is in harmony (2 Pet. 2:4). And Paul settles the matter that these fallen and now imprisoned spirit beings will have a trial as well as mankind, under the reign of Christ – the Church, the kingdom of God in exalted power. Speaking of the propriety of our deciding earthly difficulties, he says, "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?...Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:1-4). The Greek word here rendered judge, is *krino*, of the same root as *krisis*, rendered judgment in Jude 7, and signifies, to govern, to test, as to mete out to each individual blessings or stripes, according to the merit of their course when brought fully into the light of truth, and under all the blessings of the reign of Christ. Thus it is seen that it will be part of the work of the Christ to rule over and direct both human and angelic sinners – "to judge the world" of fallen men, now restrained in death, from which they have been redeemed – and also fallen spirits, restrained alive until this judgment or trial of the Great Millennial Day, when the saints under the headship of Jesus shall try their cause also, giving everlasting life and favor to those who shall then prove themselves worthy of it, and everlasting destruction to those unworthy.

Besides, we find frequent references to a work Christ is to do in subjecting heavenly or spiritual, as well as human powers, when the church which is his body has been selected and the work of judging and blessing commences. For instance, we read (Eph. 1:10), "In the dispensation of the fullness of times, to re-establish [under God's dominion and law] all things in Christ [the disordered things] that are in heaven [spiritual] and on earth [human], in him." – *Douay*

*translation.* Again, "In him it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace by the blood of his cross, both as to the things *on earth*, and the things *in heaven*" – earthly and spiritual transgressors – Col. 1:20 Douay.

In Eph. 3:8-10, it is shown that the length and breadth of God's redemptive plan, has been hidden by God until the Gospel Age, when the Apostles were commissioned to declare to men, the conditions upon which they might become sharers with Jesus in the execution of God's loving plans, and the intent is, ultimately to have all the heavenly or spiritual beings know, through the instrumentality of the Church, the boundless wealth that is in God's great gift – His Son – and the different methods and steps his wisdom marked out for all his creatures. We quote the passage from the Diaglott translation: –

"To me, the very lowest of the saints, was this favor given – To announce among nations the glad tidings – the BOUNDLESS WEALTH of the Anointed One: even to enlighten all as to what is the [method of] administration [or operation] of that secret [plan] which has been concealed from the ages, by that God who created all things; in order that now [henceforth] may be made known to the governments and the authorities in the heavenlies, through [the instrumentality of] the congregation [church] the *much diversified wisdom* of God, according to the plan of the ages," "which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

It would appear, then, that God's bountiful plan and diversified wisdom contains something of interest to the angels, and if of interest to any, of special interest to those confined or restrained, and awaiting a trial in the judgment of the great day. They see the saints and seek to look into things revealed by the spirit and Word to these, but in no other way can they learn of their future, or of what provision has been made for them in the boundless wealth and diversified wisdom of God, because it is to be "made known," "through the church."

These condemned angels have been learning much since the first text and sermon – the lesson of Jesus' obedience and exaltation (1 Pet. 3:18-20 and 1 Tim. 3:16); for we read that "*we* are made a spectacle to both angels and to men." (1 Cor. 4:9 – *Diaglott.*) The spectacle and lesson is both to men and angels for the reason that both men and angels will shortly be judged by the church, and blessed by it, if found obedient and worthy of life. When the testimony in due time is given, all things, both in heaven (the spiritual condition) and on earth (the human) shall bow to Jehovah's Anointed and confess him their Lord and Ruler; and those who refuse his righteous authority, shall be cut off as unworthy of life. – Isa. 45:23. Rom. 14:11. Matt. 25. Acts 3:33.

The angels that sinned in the days of Noah, have had a bitter experience since, no doubt death would have been preferable in many respects. Cut off from association with good angels and placed in the companionship of each other and Satan, without God and having no hope, they must have had a terrible experience, with sin's demoralizing effects, while their observation of mankind dying on account of sin, would lead them to surmise that such might ultimately be their portion. Surely, many of them will be prepared for a return to their former estate and its privileges and blessings, on whatever terms a just God may prescribe.

We cannot forget, too, their respectful conduct toward our Lord and his apostles, and the message they delivered; far more respectful indeed than that of the strictest sect of the Jewish church. While the latter scoffed and said, "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph?" (John 6:42) the former exclaimed "Thou art the Son of God," (Mark 3:11.) While the former said, "Thou hast a devil and art mad," the latter said, "I know thee who thou art, the HOLY ONE of God." – Mark 1:24.

While they respected the true, they opposed the false, saying to some who pretended to exercise power – "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? And **[R993 : page 5]** the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them and overcame them." – Acts 19:15.

The Jews and Gentiles beat and stoned the messengers of God when they came among them with the glad tidings of salvation, but some of these fallen angels seemed desirous of spreading the glad tidings. One followed the Apostles, saying: "These men are the servants of the most high God which show unto us the way of salvation." – Acts 16:17.

### **THE BASIS OF THEIR HOPE.**

But an important question now arises. The Scriptures show us that our hope centres in the fact that a ransom price was given for our sins, but what is the basis of hope for these fallen angels? On what ground can they have a trial and hope of future everlasting life? Did our Lord die for them?

We are not so informed: The ransom-sacrifice was human, a ransom for men. "Verily," says Paul, "he took not on him the nature of angels," etc. (Heb. 2:16.) Furthermore, they were not under condemnation of death, and hence have never lost their life in any measure, and would need no ransom from death, when they were not in, nor condemned to it. It was because the sentence of DEATH had passed upon men that a ransom was necessary in order that we might regain life. Those angels which kept not their first estate, were condemned, not to death, but *to restraint and confinement, until a day of trial*, when God will judge both men and angels in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. (Acts 17:31.) They are therefore undergoing their penalty as truly as man is suffering his, though they be very different in kind – "according to the much diversified wisdom of God."

And yet they had a great interest in our Lord's sacrifice; for though they were not being redeemed, bought by the precious blood, as was man, and did not need to be, not being under condemnation to death, yet their hope centered in the power which he should gain through his exaltation to the divine nature, in consequence of his obedience even unto death, to judge and restore them in due time.

Again, if we have a correct view of the matter, that *these angels* had been tempted and seduced by evil in men, which had become very great (Gen. 6:5) then we see how the reconciliation accomplished by the blood of the cross for man would apply to and cancel both direct and *indirect* guilt, which resulted *from* the one man's disobedience. So that now, in the words of the Apostle, "It pleased the Father...having made peace [propitiation – satisfaction] by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, whether things [out of harmony] in earth, or things in heaven." – Col. 1:20.

### **GOD'S COMPREHENSIVE LAW.**

God's wisdom, love, and justice decide on what is best, and that decision is his will or law. But strictly speaking, only so much of God's will as he expresses to his creatures *is law to them*. Hence while his laws never conflict, they may be more or less fully expressed on one occasion than on another.

All of God's intelligent creatures are under instruction, being taught those laws which his infinite love, wisdom and justice have enacted for the well-being of all. Though created perfect, each in his plane of being, yet they all lack that scope of knowledge and wisdom which belongs in full measure only to the divine nature. They all lack experience: hence in giving them instruction in the wisdom and propriety of his laws, it has pleased Jehovah to make an illustration which would manifest and practically exemplify his own character and prove to his creatures the wisdom and righteousness of his laws.

It is evident, that the spirit of his law is not to take advantage of some transgressive slip, occasioned by lack of experience on the part of his creatures, but that he intends it to apply to the thoughts and intents of the hearts. That this is the real intent of God, we shall see illustrated by his dealings with those who have from lack of knowledge become sinners.

His law in full, as we now see it in the light of His Word, is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" that no being shall be permitted to live, who, when fully informed of God's righteous will, and enabled to obey it, shall not conform thereto; that all such shall be cut off from life. But this is as it may be seen NOW. Once it was not so clearly expressed, nor so clearly seen.

To exemplify this law fully, God caused man to be used as an illustration before this extreme penalty was placed upon the angels. So, God placed on man the full extreme penalty of his law – death, knowing that through inexperience he would violate that law and come under its penalty. But God proposed to make an *illustration* to all his creatures of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its sure consequences, while at the same time his love and wisdom so marked out the plan, that mankind, the illustration, might not suffer loss, but be fully recovered from the penalty, and be blessed by being everlastingly guarded against sin, by the lessons learned.

Nor should we forget that God's dealing with man was perfectly just. He had a perfect right to demand perfect obedience from a perfect creature; and the fact that he has not required it at first of the angels, was a favor toward them, permitting them to acquire by observation of mankind, a knowledge of sin and its dire results, before being placed liable to its extreme penalty; even as toward man he has displayed his favor also, though in a different manner – through a ransom, and Savior, and restitution, and future trial for life, more favorable than the first, because of the knowledge of sin and its effects, meanwhile acquired by experience. This was a masterly stroke of wise economy on God's part; for had the death penalty been pronounced on the angels who sinned, a redeemer of their own kind would have been necessary for their recovery; and not only one, but many; for they were not representatively, but individually on trial. By the method chosen the grand result is accomplished through the instrumentality of the one sacrifice and the benefits which flow therefrom. Let us briefly



## VIEW THE EXHIBITION

of God's character as displayed in his dealing toward mankind whom he made a spectacle to angels. (1 Cor. 4:9.) In so doing, let us guard against the common error which judges of God's actions exactly as of our own. Let us remember that justice, love, wisdom, and power, as commonly displayed by the fallen race, in dealing with each other, and by human parents with their children, are far from being perfect, as at first – the image of those qualities in Jehovah. In consequence of the fall these qualities are constantly at war with each other, in our experience. Sometimes love has a victory over justice, and sometimes justice has a victory over love.

But with Jehovah there can be no conflict; and neither ever gains a victory or ascendancy over the other. Both are perfect, and work only in perfect harmony.

Before man was created, the justice, wisdom, love, and power of God held conference on the subject, and devised the plan which has since been developing. The plan was suggested by wisdom and concurred in by the other attributes, the arrangement and execution of it being left in Wisdom's hands.

Wisdom designed to have the largest returns of experience and benefit to man, and the most valuable illustration of God's character to all his creatures, on every plane of being. Accordingly Wisdom said, Let the man come under the control of Justice, Love, and Power, separately, that the force and operation of each may be the more forcibly illustrated. Let Justice first have complete control, let the man be dealt with by the strict law, "Thou shalt not" – . "In the day that thou dost...dying thou shalt die." And so it was.

Man, inexperienced and unused to self control and liberty, violated the law, and experienced the full weight of Justice, as Wisdom had foreseen and prepared for.

The lesson under Justice has been long and severe, but the lesson must be thorough, so that it shall never need repeating. Men and angels must learn that Justice is relentless, irrevocable and unalterable. Then, too, before it could be realized that the remedy for man lay only in Jehovah and nowhere else, an opportunity was offered for the trial of other methods for his recovery. First, the angels were given rulership, (during the age before the flood), and made a miserable failure; for while man became more and more corrupt himself, his evil influence led to the fall of some of those who attempted his assistance – "those angels which kept not their first estate."

With the Deluge that order of affairs passed away. Then, under the law, given to one selected nation, another and a different opportunity was offered, to prove to man that even if God should cancel all enmity, or resentment, and receive the world into covenant relations, yet they would require a Restorer so that they could continue in harmony with God, even after being brought back. Hence sacrifices and offerings for sin were instituted, and God treated that nation as though original sin and guilt had been removed, and then placed them under law to prove *to them*, to us and to all, their inability (as degenerate creatures) to keep his law without a restitution to perfection – to his likeness.

Meanwhile Love stood ready to manifest itself at the moment Wisdom should give the word. Love would have done so at once, but for two reasons: First, it could not oppose or interfere with the action of Justice in condemning man and delivering him over for the execution of the prescribed penalty. Secondly; Though Love might have acknowledged Justice and approved its action by promptly providing a ransom (an equivalent price), Wisdom objected and did not permit this course at *that time*, because it saw best to make the lesson complete and thorough.

Hence for over four thousand years Love was not permitted to manifest itself, and might only speak in shadowy sacrifices and ceremonies, and more or less obscure promises. But finally, when the

right time had come, "in due time," "in the fullness of time," Wisdom gave the word, and Love began to manifest itself for man's relief. The first act was to produce a perfect and sinless man to be a suitable "ransom for all," and it must be one not under the Adamic curse, who would lay down his life for the race, and whose sacrifice would meet all the requirements of justice, and therefore be acceptable as a ransom and propitiation for our sins. And Love's great exhibition was seen in the gift of the grandest, and greatest, and first of all God's creation, who became a man to redeem men: and "they called his name Jesus" when he became a man.

Ah! says one who judges by his own habits and feelings, Now comes Love's victory over Justice. We shall see that God is more loving than severe. But not so; God is not more loving than severely just: he is perfect in both respects. It will be indeed a victory for Love, but not over Justice. It will be much grander than that. It will prove a victory for both Justice and Love; for it will be gained by Love's *paying the price* demanded by Justice – a RANSOM, "an equivalent price."

Thus did the love of God magnify the justice and law of God, and "make it honorable," by acknowledging its claims in the payment of the very penalty demanded – man's death. – Rom. 5:19.

We need scarcely say, that the love of God so long veiled from sight, was manifested in the gift of his Son to be our Redeemer and Saviour. The record is: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation [satisfaction or appeasement] for our sins." "*In this was manifested the love of God* toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might LIVE through him." – 1 Jno. 4:9,10.

When Love had RANSOMED man, and was ready to reveal itself by restoring mankind to perfection and harmony with God, Wisdom postponed it on the ground that a further development of the plan would ultimately enhance Love's glory, and perfect the work: that an interlude [the Gospel age] must occur in which should be selected some from

among the redeemed; some sharers in Christ's sufferings and reproach, who should be counted worthy to share his glory, and to be his associates in the execution of Love's triumph in "the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets."

Long and faithfully has Love labored, yet all her labor will yet be lost, unless in due time Wisdom shall commission Power to do its special part in the great plan.

Power thus far has stood in the background, doing nothing directly in man's relief, save in the resurrection of our Lord and in the miracles, which shadowed forth its coming work.

Now, we are living in the day when Power begins to act, not in opposition to Justice, but in harmony with Wisdom, Justice, and Love, in crushing out sin and evil, and in legally removing the penalty of sin and the dominion of evil, cancelled through the ransom, paid by Jesus. Oh, blessed day! The Lamb that was slain and who redeemed us by his blood is now invested with Power to restore and bless all whom he bought, and he is now about taking unto himself his great power, and shall reign until he hath put all enemies in subjection. – Rev. 20:6; and 1 Cor. 15:25.

Thus, God has chosen the plan which most fully and grandly exemplifies his unalterable justice, and exhibits the exceeding riches of his grace – his love; and in the restoration of man from destruction from death, to life and perfection, will God's power be illustrated far more forcibly than even in man's creation. And as **[R993 : page 6]** men and angels come to recognize the full fruition of God's plan in the ages to come, will they not with one consent exclaim with our brother Paul, as he caught a glimpse of it: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind [plan] of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?...Because out of him, and through him, and for him are all things. To him be the glory for ever." – Rom. 11:34-36.

## THE DIVERSIFIED WISDOM OF GOD.

"The much-diversified wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10. *Diaglott*) pursued one course with reference to men, and another with reference to the angels, not delivering them over to justice under the extreme penalty of the law, but pronouncing a lesser penalty until they should learn of evil and its consequences from the "spectacle" furnished them in mankind.

But the result of wisdom's course in either case is the same. The angels being perfect, and having had an example of the extreme penalty of the law, will be able and doubtless glad to conform to God's law when again offered the opportunity. Man, who experienced the extreme penalty of the law, when restored, will be able to appreciate forever good and evil, and to rightly choose that which is good. While both will then be liable to the extreme penalty – death – neither need come under it, because of perfection and knowledge. They will then, as God does, love righteousness because it is good and hate unrighteousness because it is wrong.

Though the experience of angels might at first appear less severe than man's, yet when it is remembered that man's dying experience was limited to an average of three-score years and ten, while the angels who sinned experienced over four thousand years of living restraint under Satan's rule, it will generally be conceded that their experience was not less severe than man's.

In view of the great work to be accomplished, how necessary is the elevation of the Christ (head and body) to the DIVINE nature, since his mission is to govern, direct, and bring to perfection "whosoever will," both of spiritual and human beings. And does not the selection of this class, made different both from angels and men – of the divine nature – illustrate yet further the much diversified wisdom of God, whereby he is able to work all things according to the counsel of his own will?

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