

## A MISAPPREHENSION

Some seem to get the impression, that for the Lord to finally destroy some of his creatures – Satan, and such as have his spirit of opposition to righteousness, – would imply a failure of the divine plan. Such ask, Is it not written that "All his purposes shall be accomplished?" and, Cannot God melt the hardest hearts? and will not Christ subdue all things unto himself and reign until he has put down all enemies?

Yes, we answer; God's plan will be fully accomplished, but it does not follow that every human plan is the divine one. Nowhere has God declared it to be his plan to preserve everlastingly every creature he has made, and to *force* all such into obedience. To suppose such pride on the part of the Almighty would be to accuse him of folly. And if such a pride of workmanship related to man would it not extend to all of his creation and insure the resurrection to everlasting life, of every animal, fowl, fish and insect that ever lived?

But such is not God's declared plan. On the contrary, while the Scriptures declare that God takes no pleasure in the death of any of the human family, but would or is willing that all should turn unto him and live, and has made abundant provision in harmony with this, his will, through Christ's sacrifice and coming Millennial reign, yet he declares clearly, that as sin in Eden brought death (from which we were redeemed by Christ's death, because it was not the penalty of our own wilful sin) so when each stands trial for himself the penalty will be no different; for God and his law have not changed. "The wages of sin is death," still. And in the individual trial, "The soul that sinneth [wilfully], it shall die," though in that [Millennial] day none shall die for another's sins, as now.

So far from planning to coerce all men into his service, God's plan is the very reverse; only the *willingly* obedient shall eat the good of

the land – shall partake of his bounties of lasting life and favor. Had God chosen to make man a mere machine – without will of his own, acting only as acted upon – would he not after making the machine right, *keep it right*; and not permit it to fall into destruction? *Experience* would be worse than wasted on such beings. But this theory would necessitate the conclusion, that God is responsible for all the sin and misery of the world. It implies that the fault is all with God, and starts the inquiry, Why did he not make the human machine as he wanted it at first? If this theory were true, God would be the great and only sinner; the only one justly worthy of punishment.

But this theory would make God a liar, a deceiver, a hypocrite and unjust; for he tells us that the sin was *man's*, and that the penalty inflicted was *just*. Let us believe God. The man he created was a fleshly image of himself. He was in a fit condition to be tried or tested, to prove **[R1107 : page 7]** himself worthy or unworthy of life. He was organically *perfect*; nothing imperfect would be an image of God; nothing else could be tried or condemned, justly. To set Adam on trial, not only for his own life but also as the representative of the race in him, and to have him *fall because created imperfect*, would be unjust; and such a trial would be a farce, a deception, a great wrong. Any penalty would be unjust under such circumstances.

Not only organically perfect, but also favorably situated in Eden, Adam had no reasonable temptation to disobey God's command, as would have been the case had other food been scarce and he about to die of hunger. If, having promised him life, God had made insufficient provision of food, etc., and forbidden a fruit necessary to his existence, Adam would have had some excuse for his disobedience and might have said, Lord you promised me life, but I was dying of hunger, and therefore I ate supposing you had forgotten your promise. In such a case the disobedience would not have been wilful, but under provocation – temptation. But God tempteth no man.

It is true, though Adam had a perfect brain, he had not reached perfect knowledge and experience at the time of his trial. It was not needful to a fair trial that he should have had experience in disobedience, [R1108 : page 7] or a knowledge beyond what he possessed. He knew that God was his Creator and Benefactor and that he ought to render obedience to his commands, if he would continue to enjoy his favor and blessings. Nor was it needful to the trial that he should have large *experience* in the use of his perfect mind, for instance for the construction of apparatus for analyzing the forbidden fruit, to see whether it contained something really injurious, or for reasoning out the cause of its prohibition. The reason and propriety of this as a trial or test of his *obedience*, he no doubt would have been permitted to fully understand afterward, had he continued obedient to God.

Adam was not *deceived* even (1 Tim. 2:14); he disobeyed God knowingly and willingly, evidently with the expectation and intention of dying; because his loved companion had been deceived into disobedience. As a free moral agent, he was left to do as he chose, and he wilfully chose to disobey and received the penalty – death.

This power of will or choice belongs to human nature as God made it. Were it otherwise, human nature could not be called an image or likeness of God's nature. God has a will and exercises it. Man, made in God's likeness, must have a similar will of his own, and must be similarly free in its exercise. Adam's proper course would have been to say, Though all my happiness seems lost by the disobedience of my dear companion, for I know that God meant all he said, when he pronounced the penalty for disobedience, yet two wrongs will never make one right. I will be obedient myself, and go to God and confess with sorrow the case as it is, and solicit his mercy in view of the extenuating circumstance of Eve's deception. I will lay the case in the hands of our kind benefactor, praying that whatever his love and wisdom and power and justice can arrange may be done for her atonement and recovery. Peradventure he may see a way to maintain

his own justice, and yet spare the only companion I have on earth. But self-will chose the independent course; and Adam determined to share the fate of his wife. His was really a case of suicide.

Human nature has not changed, though our free agency is very largely curtailed by our unfavorable surroundings and our unbalanced, unsound minds on all subjects. With the restoration or resurrection, under the advantageous surroundings and allowances of the Millennium, the free agency or free will of man so far from being utterly destroyed will be restored, perfectly and completely; and by their will all will be judged worthy or unworthy of life everlasting. If it were a labor for the Almighty to create human beings or to destroy them, or if numbers were a necessity in his plan, there might be some room for questioning whether ages and ages of effort would not be made to bend the wills and turn the hearts of those found incorrigible during, and at the close of, the Millennium. But, when to create or destroy, are as easy with the Almighty as to preserve us alive, we see the wisdom of his plan of giving and continuing life to only such as appreciate it as his favor, and who, when fully informed, will rejoice to co-operate with God in recognizing it as the all in all of wisdom and righteousness – their wills being in perfect harmony with his.

The promise that all things shall be "subdued," or "put under Christ," refers to the power that will coerce active evil during the Millennial age. All things actively in opposition to God's plan and law will be subdued, restrained, hindered. And if, after being for a time outwardly forced to obey the laws of righteousness, the former evil-doers continue opposed at heart they shall be cut off (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:7-10,15), that evil may be rooted out and righteousness firmly and lastingly established in and through them that love it.