

"ANGELS WHICH KEPT NOT THEIR FIRST ESTATE."

"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 bare 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"), with the earthly institutions under it, is termed "the present evil world," dispensation or epoch.* Moreover, we are informed that the present dominion of evil has not always existed, 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.

*See [MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I, Chapter iv.](#)

The three worlds mentioned by Peter (2 Pet. 3:6,7,13) designate these three great epochs of time. In each, 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, justice, love and power, to the wonder and admiration of all his creatures.

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 that the prince of this present evil world was not the *prince* of that order which preceded this – the dispensation before the flood – however widely his influence was then exerted and felt.

Several Scriptures throw light on God's dealings during that first dispensation, and give clearer insight into his plan 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; who were permitted to do what they could and desired to do to recover and rule the fallen race, which, because of sin, needed a government other than its own.

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 our Lord 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. – Heb. 2:2,5.

In their original estate all the angels, it seems, possessed the ability to appear in earthly forms. **[R1678 : page 231]** Thus Satan appeared to Eve as a serpent, or acting through 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. (John 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 then alone and had no followers or angels.

The ambition of Satan, one of the mighty angels, to become a ruler seems to have developed as he beheld the first human pair with their

procreative powers, and the grand possibilities of an extended dominion through their posterity. He probably reasoned that, if he could obtain the control of this man, he would have the dominion over all his offspring, and be in power and influence above others – a rival of Jehovah himself; and his growing ambition said, "I will be *like* the Most High." – Isa. 14:14.

Successful in contaminating the stream at its source, Satan gained a great influence over the race; but his power over them was limited because of the competition of the great company of angels, who, as guardians, instructed and ruled mankind for a time in harmony with the will of God. But man's corruption was contagious, and some of these angelic rulers soon fell victims to the plague: 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.

This Scripture is applied by some 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 [R1678 : page 232] *man* to take for a wife *another man's* daughter. Marriage among men is never in the Scriptures condemned as sinful. On the contrary, it was ordained of God, and has always had his sanction. (Gen. 2:24; Heb. 13:4.) Our Lord attested his approval by his presence at the marriage in Cana. (John 2:1-11.) Neither is the propagation of the race, under proper conditions, condemned as sinful. God commanded it, that the earth might be filled with a race of beings generated from one pair, and in order that the redemption of the race might be secured by the obedience and sacrifice of one – Christ. (Gen. 1:28; Rom. 5:19.) However, those to whom the Lord has granted a knowledge of his truth sometimes forego marriage, as they deny themselves many other earthly rights and privileges "for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12), if they consider that thereby a more efficient service may be rendered to the Lord.*

*See issue of July '93 – "Man and Woman in God's Order."

Again, if it were merely a union of two classes of the same race, why should the offspring be specially called "*men of renown?*" If the righteous and the wicked marry to-day, are their children therefore giants or mightier 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 did thus 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, 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 debarred from all association with God and his works and plan, these fallen angels have no longer any pleasure in things on the spiritual plane, but crave association with depraved mankind and a participation with men 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, as spirit mediums, but no more can they do. Thus far shalt thou go, saith the

Almighty, but no further. This is the explanation of what is known as Spiritism.

Some of this class, possessed by devils, our Lord 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 the Lord 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 (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 prohibits any mixture or blending of natures, and designs that each should keep its own original or first estate is clearly taught by this passage and also by Lev. 18:23; 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, the inability of those angels to lift man out of his fallen condition, and the debasing influence of man's continued degradation 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. God let them try it, and it was doubtless part of their trial and discipline, but they failed. Some joined the ranks of evil, while the rest stood by powerless to arrest the terrible

course of sin. Later we find the good angels still interested, desiring to look into the plan which God has since been working out, and ever ready to do his bidding in our service. (1 Pet. 1:12.) Thus was proven to **[R1678 : page 233]** both men and angels the futility of angelic power to save men.

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 judgment in the deluge, the tendency was still downward; and soon the wickedness of Sodom brought its destruction. Mankind were 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; and now, instead of sending heavenly messengers to declare to us his will, he has given us his Word, "that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished [thereby] unto all good works." – 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

Ever since the fall, God's plan has been gradually and quietly developing, and in due time will bear abundant fruit unto eternal life; and he has now demonstrated to all his creatures that *his* plan is the only one which could accomplish the great work. 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 life 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 the 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 supposed 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. Surely it was not merely to mock and deride them. 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 for the antediluvians, why not accept our position as correct – that in Christ [R1679 : page 233] "*all* 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 and "hell," we must reason that if Jesus were 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, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave." (Eccl. 9:10.) Second, 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 as well as unscriptural.*

*For a full treatment of the subject of "hell," future punishment, etc., see our issue of Feb. 1-15, '93. Concerning "immortality" see issue of Apr. 15, '94.

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, nor before the flood, but after they had been chained, – by the death and resurrection of our Lord.

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 them 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 our Lord preach to those spirits 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 **[R1679 : page 234]** by the Apostle (1 Pet. 3:22), 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 our Lord's obedient course and its grand results. We can fancy at least some of 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, and his ultimate destruction is clearly predicted. – Heb. 2:14.

But did not the Lord, in Matt. 25:41, declare eternal torment to be the punishment awaiting these fallen spirit beings? No: this scripture 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 continue such, if an opportunity be granted them to return to God's service and be angels of God. This passage relates to the "lake of fire" or destruction (Rev. 20:10),* 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. All 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.

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 our Lord, ever have an opportunity to profit by those lessons? will they ever have an opportunity to repent of their sin, to leave Satan's service and to 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 hear. 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 (as a 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). The Apostle Peter's testimony is in harmony (2 Pet. 2:4); and St. Paul settles the matter that these fallen and now imprisoned spirit beings, as well as mankind, will have a trial under the reign of Christ – the Church, the Kingdom of God in exalted power. Speaking of the impropriety of the saints appealing to earthly courts of justice for adjustment of their 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 his 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 Church under the headship of her Lord 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 has been selected and the work of judging and blessing is commenced. For instance, we [R1679 : page 235] read (Eph. 1:10), "In the dispensation of the fulness 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 fulness 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 Christ 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 governments and the authorities in the heavenlies, through [the instrumentality of] the

congregation [the Church] the *much diversified wisdom* of God, according to a 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; – not only the lesson of our Lord's obedience and exaltation (1 Pet. 3:18-20; 1 Tim. 3:16), but also of his followers; for we read that "*we* are made a spectacle both to angels and to men." (1 Cor. 4:9 – *Diaglott.*) The spectacle and lesson are to both 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 obedience to his righteous authority shall be cut off, as unworthy of life. – Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Acts 3:23.

The angels that sinned in the days of Noah have had a bitter experience since: no doubt **[R1680 : page 235]** death would have been preferable in many respects. Cut off from association with good angels, and placed in 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 death might ultimately be their portion also. That such was the fear of these unclean spirits is evidenced by the protest of one whom the Lord cast out: "Art thou come

to destroy us?" (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Matt. 8:29.) But this no more proves that their suppositions were correct, than the belief of millions of professed Christians, that nine-tenths of humanity will be everlastingly tormented, proves that to be so. The fact is, we find that Satan, who taught men thus to blaspheme God's character through misrepresentation of his plan, was the master and chief over these cast-down spirits; and evidently he had misrepresented Jehovah's plan to the imprisoned spirits as he has to men. He is the father of lies.

Neither can we forget 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.

The "legion," which had crazed the Gadarene, worshiped him, acknowledging him to be "Son of the Most High God." – Mark 5:6,7.

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 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 **[R1680 : page 236]** 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 [angels and men] the way of salvation." – Acts 16:17.

THE BASIS OF THEIR HOPE.

But an important question now arises. The Scriptures show us that man's hope centers 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 a hope of 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 to death, and hence have never lost their life in any measure, and need no ransom from death. 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 the penalties 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 men, which had become very great (Gen. 6:5), we may see how the reconciliation accomplished by the blood of the cross for man could apply to and cancel both direct and *indirect* guilt, if it resulted *from* the one man's disobedience and was not consented to by the will of the sinner. So that now we are assured in the words of the Apostle, "It pleased the Father,...having made peace [propitiation – satisfaction] through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile unto himself all things [out of harmony];...whether things 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 to the divine nature only. 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, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength," and "thy neighbor as thyself;" and the penalty attached to the slightest deviation from that law 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 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 fully exemplify this law, God caused man to be used as an illustration before this extreme penalty was placed upon the angels. So

man was placed under the extreme penalty of his law – death; God knew that through inexperience man would violate that law and come under its penalty; but he purposed 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 blessed by the lesson as learned.

Nor should we forget that God's dealing with man was perfectly just. He had a right to demand perfect obedience from a perfect creature; and the fact that he at first did not inflict death [R1680 : page 237] upon the angels was a favor toward them; 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 – one redeemer for each transgressor; for they were legion and were individually on trial; and the requirement of God's law is, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life.

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 perfect. In our first parents those qualities were perfect: they were in the image of Jehovah; but in our experience, in consequence of the fall, these qualities are constantly at war with each other. 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 then 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 from the experience of 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 men be dealt with by the strict law, "Thou shalt not" – . "In the day that thou dost...dying thou shalt die." And it was so.

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 **[R1681 : page 237]** 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 man's 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 Covenant, given to one selected nation, another and different opportunity was presented, to prove to man that even if God should cancel all enmity, or resentment, and receive the world into covenant relations, they would require a Restorer, so that they could continue in harmony with God, even after being forgiven. 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 laws 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. Second: 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 fulness 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:" 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 man's sins. And Love's great exhibition was seen in the gift of the grandest and greatest and first of all God's **[R1681 : page 238]** creation, who stooped and became man, to redeem men: and "they called his name Jesus."

"Ah!" says one who judges by his own 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." (1 Tim. 2:4-6.) The love of God, so long veiled from sight, was manifested in the gift of his Son to be our Redeemer and Savior. 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."

When Love had *ransomed* man, and was ready to reveal itself by restoring the willing and obedient of mankind to perfection and harmony with God, Wisdom postponed this 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; but 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. Oh, blessed day! The Lamb that was slain and who redeemed us by his blood is now invested with Power to bless all whom he bought; and he is now about taking unto himself his great power, and shall reign until he has subdued all enemies. – Rev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 15:25.

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 ("all who come to the Father by him") from destruction, from death, to perfection and life, will God's power be illustrated far more forcibly than even in man's creation. And as 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 and Apostle Paul, as he caught a glimpse of it: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 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. 11:33-36. **[R1682 : page 238]**

THE DIVERSIFIED WISDOM OF GOD.

"The much diversified wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10 – *Diaglott*) pursued one course with reference to the angels, not delivering the latter 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 to conform to God's law when again offered the opportunity, and doubtless many of them will be glad to do so. Man, who experienced the extreme penalty of the law, will also be able to appreciate forever good and evil, and, if he will, to choose that which is good, while both, in the event of non-conformity to God's will and a

persistence in an evil course, will then be liable to the extreme penalty – the Second Death. Those counted worthy of everlasting life will then, as God does, love righteousness because it is good, and hate unrighteousness because it is evil.

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 from both 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? Verily it does!
