

QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF JEHOVAH

THE SCRIPTURES declare a "beginning of the creation of God." His qualities and attributes were the same then that they are now; for the Scriptures also declare His unchangeableness – "the same yesterday, today and forever." – Hebrews 13:8; Psalm 90:1,2.

The completeness of the Divine perfection is such that companionship is not necessary to the happiness of Jehovah. The One who "inhabiteth eternity" is self-centered. The creation of angels and of man was indeed His pleasure, because, benevolently, He desires to do good, to give capacity for pleasure and to afford it opportunity for gratification. Furthermore, the highest good of His creatures calls for an exhibition to the full of all the elements of Divine character – Divine Justice, Love, Power and Wisdom.

BELIEF IN SATAN LOGICAL

The declaration of the Bible respecting the Father's Power is that "the eyes of the Lord [the intelligence of Jehovah] are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3.) This statement implies that there are things *evil* as well as *good*; things which God approves and things which He disapproves. This citation comes the nearest to a suggestion of God's omnipresence contained in the Scriptures.

The fact that the Lord has *knowledge* of all conditions of things is not out of harmony with the other fact that He *permits* conditions which He *disapproves*, and which He declares that He will ultimately *destroy*. "All the wicked will He destroy." – Psalm 145:20.

If we accept the great Divine premise that the Bible is the Word of God, then we are bound to accept the declaration that there is a being called Satan, that he is the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians

4:4), and that he now works in the "hearts of the children of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2.) These words imply not only that there are evil *principles* at work in this world, but that behind them there are evil *spirit beings*, of whom Satan is the inspirer and *through whom he is working*.

Certain statements are made respecting Satan which could not properly be applied to a principle of evil, or to a working of error; as, for instance, Jesus declared that Satan was a "murderer" from the beginning – and a "liar." (John 8:44.) Errors and principles are not murderers and liars. It would be a misuse of language to make such application. Only an intelligent being can be a murderer or a liar. Hence the whole tenor of the Scriptures [**R5210 : page 101**] upholds the assertion that there is such a being as Satan and that he is in opposition to God.

If we were to suppose the everlasting continuance of Satan as a being, as an adversary of God, the matter would seem strange to us, because irreconcilable with our conception of Divine Power. We have the statement of the Scriptures respecting his reign and ultimate destruction. (Hebrews 2:14.) With this information we have a reasonable, logical thought on the subject. When we consider the Scriptural presentation further, that originally Satan was *not* an *evil* being, but that he made himself evil by the exercise of personal liberty and became the enemy of God, the subject seems to be clear and reasonable. In fact, this is the only rational solution to the problem of his existence.

To suppose that there is no Satan is to suppose that God has permitted His Word to deceive mankind in this respect, or that the Devil is a manifestation of God Himself – a position which is unthinkable. Nor is it logical to say that there is a Devil, an opponent of God, and at the same time to maintain that God is all in all, and omnipresent – everywhere present. But we do not find this latter statement to be Biblical. The Scriptural proposition is that at the close

of the Millennial Age, when Christ shall have conquered sin and Satan, when Satan shall have been destroyed, and when the Kingdom of the Universe shall be in absolute harmony, then God will be all in all. (I Corinthians 15:28.) *To all eternity* there will be *no opposition* to His will. There *is* opposition now, however, in many places and at many times. But ultimately, God will have full control.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF JEHOVAH

To say that God is *all* Power is sophistry of language which often misleads the one questioning as well as the one attempting to answer him. The statement is not correct. If God is all Power, then He is not Love or Justice or Wisdom. He would thus be limited to the one great attribute of Power, or force. Such cannot be the thought entertained by any logical mind. It is, nevertheless, a form of statement that is often used, perhaps unintentionally, but very injuriously to the reasoning faculties.

The Bible nowhere says God is all Power. There is a marked difference between *being* power and *exercising* power. God is all-powerful. He has the ability to exercise power *in any* direction to the extent that He *wills*. If He had chosen, He could have so created Satan that he could not think or do other than in harmony with the Divine will; or He could have exercised His power to crush the Adversary and thus have destroyed him long ago. But He has permitted Satan to exist for six thousand years, in the sense that He does not restrain the Devil from doing evil. The Scriptures, however, tell us that God will eventually destroy him.

The scope of the exercise of Divine Power is the Universe, but it is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend the meaning of this word – *Universe*. Astronomers tell us that by the aid of photo-astronomy they can see nearly 125,000,000 suns – the centers of solar systems like our own, with supposedly more than a billion of planets more or less like our earth. These, we may assume, are in process of development, are in preparation for inhabitants, whom the great

Creator will in due time provide. From the Scriptural standpoint, however, the great work of human creation began with our earth. What a boundless thought we have in the mere suggestion that the billion worlds are to be peopled, and that the lessons of righteousness and sin, of life and death eternal, now being taught to humanity, will never need to be repeated!

We stand appalled at the immensity of space and at the law and order which everywhere reign! We heartily assent to the words of the Prophet David, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." (Psalm 19:2,3.) The person who can look upon this wonderful display of superhuman power and believe that these worlds created themselves, shows to the majority of us that, if he has brains, they are sadly disordered, unbalanced. Whoever, after mature thought, concludes that there is no God, that everything came to be what it is by chance or by the operation of some blind force – that person is described in the Scriptures in the following words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." – Psalm 14:1.

As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the Universe, we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language indeed in his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, when he represents Jehovah as weighing the mountains in His balance and holding the seas in the hollow of His Hand. **[R5210 : page 102]** (Isaiah 40:12.) From His standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. (Psalm 90:4.) How insignificantly small we all feel in the presence of our God! No wonder some great men are inclined to say that humanity is too insignificant from the Divine standpoint to be worthy of the least consideration – much less to be objects of Divine care and providence!

THE OMNISCIENCE OF JEHOVAH

To say that God is all *Knowledge* is also an inaccurate statement. If God were all Knowledge, how could He be all Power? God *has* all

Knowledge, possesses all Knowledge. But this is a different matter. If we say, "The boy has a hoop," we do not mean that *he* is a hoop. To *be* a hoop and to *have* a hoop are not the same. God is *omniscient*; that is, He *knows all things*. This very fact proves that He is a personal God. There can be no knowledge without personality. Knowledge implies cognizance of external things. Amongst the things outside the Divine Person are things both good and evil.

When we read that God created man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26,27), we may know that man is not God. He was merely made in the *image* of God. Because God is perfect, therefore the human being made in His image would be satisfactory to God. That human being had knowledge. But he neglected the Word of God, and thus he learned something by his neglect. What he learned is mentioned in the Scriptures. "He is become as one of Us [the *Elohim*], to know good and evil." (Genesis 3:22.) This statement proves that God knows good and evil.

If God did not know evil from good, then He could not be our Instructor. By His laws, His principles, God sets before our minds that which is right and that which is wrong. Adam knew how to discriminate between right and wrong, but his disobedience increased his knowledge of both good and evil. In his fallen condition man cannot always determine between them. Therefore God gave Israel a Law, and man's knowledge of that Law assists him to discriminate between good and evil.

One of old time said, "Thou art a God which hidest Thyself." (Isaiah 45:15.) How true! As a result the world by wisdom knows not God. He is near in His Wisdom and Love, yet He can be seen only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened. But we are glad that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall see clearly. "As truly as I live," says Jehovah, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge

of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14.) Then all shall see what God hath wrought, and our temporary blindness will but accentuate the glorious brightness of His Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power.

"GOD IS LOVE"

God is Love in the sense that the term Love represents the central principle of the Divine character. There is nothing contrary to love in God. The Scriptures do not teach that there is nothing except love anywhere – that God is everywhere and love is everywhere. But they teach that God is a loving character. This does not militate against the other statements that God is just, wise and powerful. But this quality of Love best of all represents the Divine Being. All of His Justice is in harmony with His Love. There is no exercise of Justice or Power in an evil sense, for all His attributes work together for good to all His creatures.

The Scriptures encourage us to reason from the known to the unknown. They tell us that although God is so great, so wise, so powerful, He is also just and loving. And the more we consider the matter, the more reasonable the Bible description of the Almighty appears. His Power we see demonstrated. The Wisdom of One so great cannot be doubted. When we come to consider, Could One so wise and so powerful be unjust or ungenerous? Our hearts answer, No! No one is really great who is devoid of justice and love. So surely as our God is Jehovah, He must possess these qualities.

When we came in contact with the Bible, and particularly after we learned something of its teachings and got rid of the misrepresentations which gathered about it during the Dark Ages – then we began to recognize it as the Message of Jehovah to His creatures. It informs us that the great Creator of the Universe is not only Almighty and All-wise, but loving and kind, with Justice as the foundation of His Empire. (Psalm 89:13,14.) From the Bible we learn, too, that our Creator has been pleased to make us in His own

image, in His own moral likeness, to the intent that we may enjoy Him and the fruits of His righteousness to all eternity.

All the Power, all the Justice, all the Wisdom, of God must be used in accordance with His own character, which is Love. It will therefore be loving Wisdom, loving Justice, which He will use toward all creation in the exercise of His loving Power for their good. He created man. He permitted Adam to disobey His Law, telling us that **[R5211 : page 102]** He knew in advance what man would do and that He permitted man to do wrong. – Isaiah 46:9,10.

In permitting sin to enter the world, God had two ends in view. He purposed to give an illustration to the angels respecting the results of obedience and of disobedience. He also intended that the human family should gain a lesson from this experience. Thus we know that God's arrangement from the beginning has been for a resurrection of the dead. "As all in Adam die, even so shall all in Christ be made alive." – I Corinthians 15:21,22.

If we were to take any fragment of Scripture as a basis for a system of doctrine, we would find ourselves either teaching universalism on the one hand, or claiming that God has no Wisdom, or that He purposed the evil, or what not. We would get into all sorts of confusion. But when we see the perfect adjustment of God's Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power, and realize that He has good purposes respecting the evil, that He has fully marked out what it shall do and what it shall not do, either in its present influence, or in its ultimate influence, this gives us confidence in the character of God.

THE PERMISSION OF EVIL

From only one standpoint can Divine Wisdom and Love be discerned in connection with the history of mankind. It must include the Age about to be ushered in – the period of Messiah's reign of righteousness. This will be the time when every member of Adam's

race, sharing the penalty of sin and death because inheriting his weaknesses, will be set free from these; the time when the full knowledge of the glory of God shall be granted to every human being, and when a full opportunity will come to each, by obedience, to gain life everlasting.

The lesson thus far taught is the goodness and the severity of God – His goodness in bringing us into being, and His severity in the punishment of Father Adam's wilful transgression; also to both men and angels, Justice, *unswerving* Justice. The next lesson to be taught to God's intelligent creatures is that God is Love. The foundation for these lessons is already laid in the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus, through and on account of which He becomes the world's Redeemer and Restorer. A few [R5211 : page 103] can believe this Message by faith; but not many have the ear of faith or the eye of faith. Only the saints are able to appreciate this great fact at the present time.

That which is now secret and understood only by the few is shortly to be made manifest to every creature in heaven and in earth. All will then see and be able to appreciate the great fact that the redemption accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus is world-wide and means a full deliverance from the sin-and-death condemnation which passed upon Adam and all of his race, to all who will accept the same as a gift from God. The remainder will be destroyed in the Second Death.

THE SECOND DEATH THE ESSENCE OF WISDOM

As for the Second Death, we easily see that if God created man in His own image, man must of necessity be a free moral agent; otherwise he would not be in God's image. If he was created a free moral agent, he must have the power or privilege to will wrong as well as right. If he exercise his power in the direction of evil, God has the power to destroy him. On the other hand, if he live in harmony with righteousness God has the power to grant him life to all eternity.

The destruction of the wicked in the Second Death is the essence of Wisdom. As to the declaration that God is too pure to behold evil (Habakkuk 1:13), the thought of the original seems to be that God's character is so pure and so righteous that He will not continue to behold evil. He will not permit evil to exist to all eternity, for this condition would not be pleasing to Him.

This very thought implies that there is evil to behold. If not so, how could He behold it? But this is all consistent with the Divine Plan. Ultimately all evil shall be destroyed. Ultimately all creatures which are "in heaven and on earth and such as are in the sea" shall be heard saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." – Revelation 5:13.

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