

## **"THY JUDGMENTS ARE A MIGHTY DEEP!"**

**"The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." – 1 CORINTHIANS 1:25.**

THE Plan which God has adopted for dealing with sin and with sinners seems to the worldly mind, to worldly wisdom, to be a very foolish, a very unwise plan. The declarations of the Bible along this line do not appeal to such minds as reasonable. First of all, God created man perfect. Then He placed him under conditions where he was tempted and fell into sin. God then pronounced upon him a sentence of death, as He had forewarned him would be the result of disobedience. After thus sentencing man, Jehovah Himself provided for a release from that death penalty by furnishing a Redeemer for the sinner at great cost. When He wished to proclaim to the world His provision for their salvation from the curse, He sent forth preachers chosen from the race of sinners to tell the good tidings.

For nearly two thousand years these preachers have used their best efforts. As some of them would die, others would take their places. But with all the preaching that has been done only a very few have believed the Message or given an attentive ear. Often have these imperfect messengers grown weary and faint. They have gone to the Lord with burdened hearts, telling Him of the meager results that attended their labors. But the Lord has answered, "Continue to give forth the words which I have delivered to you; this is My will; it is just what I wish you to do." So they have toiled on, leaving the results with God.

But the world has shaken the unbelieving head. To them the proclaiming of such a Message has seemed foolish, a waste of valuable time, an evidence of unsoundness of mind. Few have believed that it is of God – even if a God of Love existed at all.

Yet, as the Apostle tells us, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21.) He chose this method, which men denominate *foolishness*, to select a special class for a very special purpose, in connection with His great Plan. Although from the human standpoint this appears a very small and weak beginning, as if God's work is almost a failure – if He purposes to save and uplift the world – yet when the Plan of God shall have been brought to its glorious consummation, it will be seen by all to have been most wise, powerful and effective. No more shall it be

"The unbeliever's jest, the heathen's scorn." God is not now choosing the great ones of earth, but chiefly the mean things, the humble and obscure, "that no flesh shall glory in His presence." He is choosing these as instruments to bless the remainder of the world.

### **LIFE A GREAT BOON EVEN NOW**

The question has been asked: How is the Love of God to be seen from the standpoint of a deliberate arrangement beforehand which, in its outworking, has involved so vast an amount of sin, suffering and death? In thinking of this question, one should first of all rid himself wholly of the erroneous thought that sin, suffering and dying are only preludes to an eternity of woe. Then we are to remember that God is not in any way our debtor. We are His debtors, even for our existence; He owes the race nothing.

Suppose that we could disabuse all minds of the idea of eternal torture or of a purgatory of suffering after death, and should then say to them, Consider, now: Would you prefer to live on for a few years more, or would you rather die at once? Or, suppose we put it this **[R5535 : page 275]** way: Are you glad that you have an existence, or would you rather that you had never been born? We believe that the great majority would reply that they desire to *live*, that they prefer to live as long as possible. They do not wish to die,

either today or tomorrow or next year; indeed they would *never* die if they could help it!

Those who feel that they would be glad to die, or who wish that they had never been born, are those who have had more than ordinarily evil and unhappy experiences; or else they are unbalanced in mind. Many have not so much money as they would like, not so pleasant surroundings and conditions as some have and as they would wish to have. Still life is sweet; and they hold on to it with as firm a grip as possible. Love of life is inherent in man, and has survived even the sorrowful experiences consequent on the fall.

### **WHY GOD PERMITS THE PRESENT REIGN OF SIN**

But why does God permit things to be as they are? This has ever been one of the perplexing problems to the minds of those who have still sufficient faith to believe in the existence of a Supreme Creator. We do not know that we can make the matter any clearer or state it any more plainly than we have stated it in STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Volume I., in the chapter on "Why Evil Was Permitted." Putting ourselves in God's place we are able to see that He must create man either without moral faculties, like the lower animals, or else with mental and moral faculties capable of appreciating the standards of right and wrong, of appreciating his Creator, with power to reason and to choose between good and evil – between obedience and disobedience to that Creator.

Having previously brought into existence the brute creation, God wished to create a nobler order of beings, creatures in His own image and likeness, on the earthly [R5535 : page 276] plane of life. He purposed to have a race of beings who were perfect like the angels, able to appreciate the same moral standards, the same principles of righteousness. The question might be asked: How

could God so create these beings that they would not be in danger of sometime falling into sin? Evidently it was not God's purpose so to create them. He desired that they should possess the quality of free moral agency, the power to exercise their own wills for either righteousness or unrighteousness.

At the time of the creation of man, Lucifer, Son of the Morning, began to cherish ambitious designs, disloyal to his Maker. He realized that a race on a lower plane of existence than himself might be induced to choose a course at variance with the expressed will of God – their Creator. Before man's creation God had foreseen that Lucifer would deflect from the path of obedience, would become a rebel against His righteous Government, a great Adversary, and that as the result evil would break forth later in His Empire. He foresaw that through the influence of the rebellious Lucifer (thenceforth Satan – adversary, accuser, hater) man would become disobedient and fall from the condition of perfection in which he would be created.

Knowing this, and doing man no injustice, but creating him with full ability to resist temptation, God so arranged and timed the creation of man that he would be an object of attack by Satan, who would take advantage of the inexperience of Father Adam and Mother Eve and seek to capture the entire race of man. In other words, God purposed to permit this test to come to man, and knowing that Adam would fail in the testing and thus incur the penalty of death, He designed to make the experience of the race an object lesson to all His created intelligences, and at the same time to so overrule the matter that the human family would themselves eventually be delivered from the evil results of the fall and be greatly blessed, if they would profit by the lessons learned in their bitter experiences with sin, and would come back into harmony with righteousness.

## **TIME AN IMPORTANT FEATURE**

God's infinite Wisdom could not approve any as worthy of everlasting life who would not prove themselves to be in full accord with His Divine Law. The nature of sin is to propagate itself and to produce misery and degradation. With this knowledge God arranged in advance to let man have his own way. He foreknew that intelligent beings with liberty of choice and of will would eventually, if untaught and unrestricted, fall into sin, even though a penalty was attached to disobedience. He chose not to restrain Lucifer.

The Plan of God is so comprehensive that it cannot be viewed and judged from the standpoint of a few years – not even of a thousand years or six thousand years. It must be viewed from the standpoint of eternity. It was arranged, not for the well-being of creatures who would live for a few years or a few centuries, but for those who would live throughout eternal ages. His Plan must, therefore, be laid so broadly as to include all time and all beings created in His likeness, for His glory and their own eternal good.

We are not to suppose that Jehovah weeps in anguish because mankind are suffering and dying. He is a God of infinite love and sympathy; but from the beginning He knew that man would fall, and that He Himself could overrule the entire matter for the ultimate blessing and instruction of men and angels – all His created intelligences; and He purposed so to do. We ourselves know that sin and death with all their direful effects have prevailed in the world for six thousand years. We also know that our God is at the helm, and that all things will be made to work out good in the end. We think of the flood as a terrible overthrow, because so many lives were lost. Yet the calamity would have been far greater if one half had been left to mourn for the others. It is claimed that men do not suffer very much when drowning – that death by this means is comparatively easy.

Six thousand years of sin, sorrow and death seem a long while for humanity to suffer. Yet the majority of the race have not lived beyond the age of twenty years. Perhaps one-half have not lived to the age of five. Very few have reached the age of one hundred years. We all have seasons of comparative comfort, blessing and enjoyment; even under present conditions, God has been very merciful. And from the viewpoint of the glorious future, with its marvelous opportunities of blessing, its hope of eternal life for man, and its great lessons learned for all eternity by all of God's intelligent creatures, the reign of Sin and Death presents an altogether different aspect from what could otherwise be had.

In permitting the long reign of Sin and its train of evils, God has been showing forth the principles of His Government, that all may clearly discern in time what are the inevitable results of disobedience to their great Creator. We are sure that Adam and Eve were glad that God did not instantly carry out the sentence of death pronounced against them. We are sure that they were glad to be permitted to continue their existence for many years, even after they had been driven out of the Garden of Eden; and we believe that they had many experiences of more or less happiness, in spite of the tears, the pain and the sorrows that fell to their lot.

So when we view the entire history of the race of Adam, and perceive that all the experiences with sin, suffering and death are to be caused to outwork God's glorious purposes for the world, and are designed to prove a lasting lesson to all His intelligent creatures who now exist or ever will exist, we can see why He has permitted the reign of evil which to man has seemed so long. When we see, too, that God is now choosing a very select class, of very humble and obedient ones, to be used as agencies under His Only Begotten Son to recover and uplift to perfection and life everlasting all the human race who will accept the gracious provisions, we can understand why He has been pleased to call this class through the "foolishness of preaching," by very imperfect instruments. Thus

He has manifested the humble ones, who will receive His Message by any means which He is pleased to use, and who are glad to forsake sin and serve Him.

### **A SAVIOR AND A GREAT ONE**

God might have said, I will lift My curse from mankind and let them have another trial for life – an individual trial. But even if this had been in harmony with God's Justice, it would not have sufficed alone. Mankind have long been floundering in the mire of sin. They were powerless to profit from any new trial granted them that would not include a Redeemer, a Savior, who was strong, not only to bring about the abrogation of the death sentence by a payment of their penalty, but also to deliver them from all the bonds of Sin and Death in their members. He must be a Savior having power to bind the great Adversary who has so long held the race of man in slavery and blindness. He must heal their wounds, open their blinded eyes and their deafened ears, and lift them up, up, into the light and liberty of the sons of God. Truly, man needs a mighty Savior; and such, praise God, has been provided in His beloved Son!

As we trace the various steps of the marvelous Plan of the Ages, we perceive that to all who shall gain eternal **[R5535 : page 277]** life, on whatever plane of being, the path of humility is the path to glory. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." None will be granted the inestimable blessing of life everlasting who are not thoroughly proven and found worthy under testing, who do not cheerfully humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. This principle applies to both human and spirit beings. Only those who gladly obey God, out of love for Him and for His righteous laws, will be permitted to live beyond the Harvest time of the Millennial Age. All others shall utterly perish.

## **GOD'S GLORIOUS CHARACTER REVEALED**

Then the holy in every sphere of life, in every part of the mighty Universe of God, shall ascribe glory, honor and praise to the Almighty Creator and to His glorious [R5536 : page 277] Son throughout the ages of eternity. All will then see and acknowledge how marvelous was Jehovah's Plan of Redemption, how far beyond the power of fallen man to fathom. The majesty and glory of the Divine Character will stand revealed – His unswerving Justice combined with infinite compassion, His glorious Wisdom, His marvelous Love, His mighty Power. Then all will bow before Him and adore!

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love and praise!"

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