

THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES

STUDY XVI

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Our Duty Toward the Truth--Its Cost, Its Value, Its Profit.

IN THE preceding chapters we have seen that both the light of nature and that of revelation clearly demonstrate the fact that an intelligent, wise, almighty and righteous God is the Creator of all things, and that he is the supreme and rightful Lord of all; that all things animate and inanimate are subject to his control; and that the Bible is the revelation of his character and plans so far as he is pleased to disclose them to men. From it we have learned that though evil now predominates among some of his creatures, it exists for only a limited time and to a limited extent, and by his permission, for wise ends which he has in view. We have also learned that though darkness now covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, yet God's light will in due time dispel all the darkness, and the whole earth will be filled with his glory.

We have seen that his great plan is one that has required ages for its accomplishment thus far, and that yet another age will be required to complete it; and that during all the dark ages of the past, when God seemed to have almost forgotten his creatures, his plan for their future blessing has been silently but grandly working out, though during all those ages the mysteries of his plan have been wisely hidden from men. We have also seen that the day or age which is now about to dawn upon the world is to be the day of the world's judgment or trial, and that all previous preparation has been for the purpose of giving mankind in general as favorable an opportunity as possible, when, *as individuals*, they will be placed on trial

for eternal life. The long period of six thousand years has greatly multiplied the race, and their buffetings and sufferings under the dominion of evil have given them an experience which will be greatly to their advantage when they are brought to judgment. And though the race as a whole has been permitted thus to suffer for six thousand years, yet as individuals they have run their course in a few brief years.

We have seen that while the race was undergoing this necessary discipline, in due time God sent his Son to redeem them; and that while the mass of mankind did not recognize the Redeemer in his humiliation, and would not believe that the Lord's Anointed would *thus* come to their rescue, yet from among those whose hearts were toward God, and who believed his promises, God has been, during these ages past, selecting two companies to receive the honors of his kingdom--the honors of sharing in the execution of the divine plan. These two select companies, we have seen, are to constitute the two phases of the Kingdom of God. And from the prophets we learn that this kingdom is soon to be established in the earth; that under its wise and just administration all the families of the earth will be blessed with a most favorable opportunity to prove themselves worthy of everlasting life; that as the result of their redemption by the precious blood of Christ, a grand highway of holiness will be cast up; that the ransomed of the Lord (all mankind--Heb. 2:9) may walk in it; that it will be a public thoroughfare made comparatively easy for all who earnestly desire to become

pure, holy; and that all the stumbling-stones will be gathered out, and all the snares, allurements and pitfalls removed, and blessed will all those be who go up thereon to perfection and everlasting life.

It is manifest that this judgment, or rulership, cannot begin until Christ, whom Jehovah hath appointed to be the Judge or Ruler of the world, has come again--not again in humiliation, but in power and great glory: not again to redeem the world, but to judge [rule] the world in righteousness. A trial can in no case proceed until the judge is on the bench and the court is in session at the appointed time, though before that time there may be a great preparatory work. Then shall the King sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall judge them during that age by their works, opening to them the books of the Scriptures and filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord. And by their conduct under all that favor and assistance, he shall decide who of them are worthy of life everlasting in the ages of glory and joy to follow. Matt. 25:31; Rev. 20:11-13

Thus we have seen that the second advent of Messiah, to set up his kingdom in the earth, is an event in which all classes of men may have hope, an event which, when fully understood, will bring joy and gladness to all hearts. It is the day when the Lord's "little flock" of consecrated saints has the greatest cause for rejoicing. It is the glad day when the espoused virgin Church with joy becomes the Bride, the Lamb's wife; when she comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her Beloved, and enters into his glorious inheritance. It is the day when the true Church, glorified with its Head, will be endued with divine authority and power, and will begin the great work for the world, the result of which will be the complete

restitution of all things. And it will be a glad day for the world when the great adversary is bound, when the fetters that have held the race for six thousand years are broken, and when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

A knowledge of these things, and the evidences that they are nigh, even at the door, should have a powerful influence upon all, but especially upon the consecrated children of God, who are seeking the prize of the divine nature. We urge such, while they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, to lay aside every weight and hindrance, and to run patiently the race in which they have started. Look away from self and its unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections, knowing that all such weaknesses are covered fully by the merits of the ransom given by Christ Jesus our Lord, and that your sacrifices and self-denials are acceptable to God through our Redeemer and Lord--and thus only. Let us remember that the strength sufficient which God has promised us, and by use of which we can be "overcomers," is provided in his Word. It is a strength derived from a *knowledge* of his character and plans, and of the conditions upon which we may share in them. Thus Peter expresses it, saying, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you *through the knowledge* of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, *through the knowledge* of him who hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that BY THESE ye might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. 1:2-4

But to obtain this knowledge and this strength, which God thus proposes to supply to each runner for the heavenly prize, will surely test the sincerity of your consecration

vows. You have consecrated all your time, all your talents, to the Lord; now the question is, How much of it are you giving? Are you still willing, according to your covenant of consecration, to give up all?--to give up your own plans and methods, and the theories of yourselves and others, to accept of God's plan and way and time of doing his great work? Are you willing to do this at the cost of earthly friendships and social ties? And are you willing to give up time from other things for the investigation of these glorious themes so heart-cheering to the truly consecrated, with the certain knowledge that it will cost you this self-denial? If all is not consecrated, or if you only half meant it when you gave all to the Lord, then you will begrudge the time and effort needful to search his Word as for hid treasure, to obtain thus the strength needful for all the trials of faith incident to the present (the dawn of the Millennium) above other times.

But think not that the giving will end with the giving of the needful time and energy to this study: it will not. The sincerity of your sacrifice of self will be tested in full, and will prove you either worthy or unworthy of membership in that "little flock," the overcoming Church, which will receive the honors of the kingdom. If you give diligence to the Word of God, and receive its truths into a good, honest, consecrated heart, it will beget in you such a love for God and his plan, and such a desire to tell the good tidings, to preach the gospel, that it will become the all-absorbing theme of life thereafter; and this will not only separate you from the world and from many nominal Christians, *in spirit*, but it will lead to separation from such entirely. They will think you peculiar and separate you from their company, and you will be despised and counted a fool for Christ's sake; because they know us not, even as they knew not the

Lord. 2 Cor. 4:8-10; Luke 6:22; 1 John 3:1; 1 Cor. 3:18

Are you willing to follow on to know the Lord through evil and through good report? Are you willing to forsake all, to follow as he may lead you by his Word?--to ignore the wishes of friends, as well as your own desires? It is hoped that many of the consecrated who read this volume may by it be so quickened to fresh zeal and fervency of spirit, through a clearer apprehension of the divine plan, that they will be able to say, "By the grace of God, I will follow on to know and to serve the Lord, whatever may be the sacrifice involved." Like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11), let such studiously set themselves to prove what has been presented in the foregoing pages. Prove it, not by the conflicting traditions and creeds of men, but by the only correct and divinely authorized standard--God's own Word. It is to facilitate such investigation that we have cited so many scriptures.

It will be useless to attempt to harmonize the divine plan herein set forth with many of the ideas previously held and supposed to be Scriptural, yet not proved so. It will be observed that the divine plan is complete and harmonious with itself in every part, and that it is in perfect harmony with the character which the Scriptures ascribe to its great Author. It is a marvelous display of wisdom, justice, love and power. It carries with it its own evidence of superhuman design, being beyond the power of human invention, and almost beyond the power of human comprehension.

Doubtless questions will arise on various points inquiring for solution according to the plan herein presented. Careful, thoughtful Bible study will settle many of these at once; and to all we can confidently say, No question which you can

raise need go without a sufficient answer, fully in harmony with the views herein presented. Succeeding volumes elaborate the various branches of this one plan, disclosing at every step that matchless harmony of which the *truth* alone can boast. And be it known that no other system of theology even claims, or has ever attempted, to harmonize in itself *every* statement of the Bible; yet nothing short of this we can claim for these views. This harmony not only with the Bible, but with the divine character and with sanctified common sense, must have arrested the attention of the conscientious reader already, and filled him with awe, as well as with hope and confidence. It is marvelous indeed, yet just what we should expect of the TRUTH, and of God's infinitely wise and beneficent plan.

And while the Bible is thus opening up from this standpoint, and disclosing wondrous things (Psa. 119:18), the light of the present day upon the various creeds and traditions of men is affecting them in an opposite manner. They are being recognized even by their worshipers as imperfect and deformed, and hence they are being measurably ignored; and though still subscribed to, they are seldom elaborated, for very shame. And the shame attaching to these human creeds and traditions is spreading to the Bible, which is supposed to uphold these deformities of thought as of divine origin. Hence the freedom with which the various advanced thinkers, so-called, are beginning to deny various parts of the Bible not congenial to their views. How striking, then, the providence of God, which at this very time opens before his children this truly glorious and harmonious plan--a plan that rejects not one, but harmonizes every part and item of his Word. Truth, when due, becomes *meat* for the household of faith, that they may grow thereby. (Matt. 24:45) Whoever comes in contact with truth,

realizing its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised. To ignore it does not release from responsibility. If we accept it ourselves, we have a responsibility TOWARD IT also, because it is for ALL the household of faith; and each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and, if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! If it again becomes darkness, how great will be the darkness. Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!

The Divine Weaving

"See the mystic Weaver sitting
High in heaven--His loom below.
Up and down the treadles go.
Takes, for web, the world's dark ages,
Takes, for woof, the kings and sages.
Takes the nobles and their pages,
Takes all stations and all stages.
Thrones are bobbins in His shuttle.
Armies make them scud and scuttle--
Web into the woof must flow:
Up and down the nations go!
At the Weaver's *will* they go!

"Calmly see the mystic Weaver
Throw His shuttle to and fro;
'Mid the noise and wild confusion,
Well the Weaver seems to know
What each motion, and commotion,
What each fusion, and confusion,
In the grand result will show!

"Glorious wonder! What a weaving!
To the *dull*, beyond believing.
Such no fabled ages know.
Only faith can see the mystery,
How, along the aisles of history,
Where the feet of sages go,
Loveliest to the fairest eyes,

Grand the mystic tapet lies!
Soft and smooth, and ever spreading,
As if made for angels' treading--
Tufted circles touching ever:
Every figure has its plaidings,
Brighter forms and softer shadings,
Each illumined--what a riddle!
From a cross that gems the middle.

"'Tis a saying--some reject it--
That its light is all reflected;

That the tapet's lines are given
By a Sun that shines in heaven!
'Tis believed--by all believing--
That great God, Himself, is weaving,
Bringing out the world's dark mystery,
In the light of faith and history;
And, as web and woof diminish,
Comes the grand and glorious finish,
When begin the Golden Ages,
Long foretold by seers and sages."