

# THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES

## STUDY VII

### THE PERMISSION OF EVIL AND ITS RELATION TO GOD'S PLAN

Why Evil was Permitted--Right and Wrong as Principles--The Moral Sense--God Permitted Evil, and will Overrule it for Good--God not the Author of Sin--Adam's Trial not a Farce--His Temptation Severe --He Sinned Wilfully--The Penalty of Sin not Unjust, nor Too Severe--The Wisdom, Love and Justice Displayed in Condemning All in Adam--God's Law Universal.

EVIL is that which produces unhappiness; anything which either directly or remotely causes suffering of any kind-- *Webster*. This subject, therefore, not only inquires regarding human ailments, sorrows, pains, weaknesses and death, but goes back of all these to consider their primary cause-- sin-- and its remedy. Since sin is the cause of evil, its removal is the only method of permanently curing the malady.

No difficulty, perhaps, more frequently presents itself to the inquiring mind than the questions, Why did God permit the present reign of evil? Why did he permit Satan to present the temptation to our first parents, after having created them perfect and upright? Or why did he allow the forbidden tree to have a place among the good? Despite all attempts to turn it aside, the question will obtrude itself-- Could not God have prevented all possibility of man's fall?

The difficulty undoubtedly arises from a failure to comprehend the plan of God. God could have prevented the entrance of sin, but the fact that he did not should be sufficient proof to us that its present permission is designed ultimately to work out some greater good. God's plans, seen in their completeness, will prove the wisdom of the course pursued. Some inquire, Could not God, with whom all things are possible, have interfered in season to prevent the full accomplishment of Satan's design? Doubtless he could; but such interference would have prevented the accomplishment

of his own purposes. His purpose was to make manifest the perfection, majesty and righteous authority of his law, and to prove both to men and to angels the evil consequences resulting from its violation. Besides, in their very nature, some things are impossible even with God, as the Scriptures state. It is "impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6:18) "He cannot deny himself." (2 Tim. 2:13) He cannot do wrong, and therefore he could not choose any but the wisest and best plan for introducing his creatures into life, even though our short-sighted vision might for a time fail to discern the hidden springs of infinite wisdom.

The Scriptures declare that all things were created for the Lord's pleasure (Rev. 4:11)--without doubt, for the pleasure of dispensing his blessings, and of exercising the attributes of his glorious being. And though, in the working out of his benevolent designs, he permits evil and evildoers for a time to play an active part, yet it is not for evil's sake, nor because he is in league with sin; for he declares that he is "not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness." (Psa. 5:4) Though opposed to evil in every sense, God *permits* (i.e., does not hinder) it for a time, because his wisdom sees a way in which it may be made a lasting and valuable lesson to his creatures.

It is a self-evident truth that for every right principle there is a corresponding wrong principle; as, for instance, truth and

falsity, love and hatred, justice and injustice. We distinguish these opposite principles as *right* and *wrong*, by their effects when put in action. That principle the result of which, when active, is beneficial and productive of ultimate order, harmony and happiness, we call a *right* principle; and the opposite, which is productive of discord, unhappiness and destruction, we call a *wrong* principle. The results of these principles in action we call *good* and *evil*; and the intelligent being, capable of discerning the right principle from the wrong, and voluntarily governed by the one or the other, we call virtuous or sinful.

This faculty of discerning between right and wrong principles is called *the moral sense*, or *conscience*. It is by this moral sense which God has given to man that we are able to judge of God and to recognize that he is good. It is to this moral sense that God always appeals to prove his righteousness or justice; and by the same moral sense Adam could discern sin, or unrighteousness, to be *evil*, even before he knew all its consequences. The lower orders of God's creatures are not endowed with this moral sense. A dog has some intelligence, but not to this degree, though he may learn that certain actions bring the approval and reward of his master, and certain others his disapproval. He might steal or take life, but would not be termed a sinner; or he might protect property and life, but would not be called virtuous--because he is ignorant of the moral quality of his actions.

God could have made mankind devoid of ability to discern between right and wrong, or able only to discern and to do right; but to have made him so would have been to make merely a living machine, and certainly not a mental image of his Creator. Or he might have made man perfect and a free agent, as he did, and have guarded him

from Satan's temptation. In that case, man's experience being limited to good, he would have been continually liable to suggestions of evil from without, or to ambitions from within, which would have made the everlasting future uncertain, and an outbreak of disobedience and disorder might always have been a possibility; besides which, good would never have been so highly appreciated except by its contrast with evil.

God first made his creatures acquainted with good, surrounding them with it in Eden; and afterward, as a penalty for disobedience, he gave them a severe knowledge of evil. Expelled from Eden and deprived of fellowship with himself, God let them experience sickness, pain and death, that they might thus forever know evil and the inexpediency and exceeding sinfulness of sin.

By a comparison of results they came to an appreciation and proper estimate of both; "And the Lord said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." (Gen. 3:22) In this their posterity share, except that they first obtain their knowledge of evil, and cannot fully realize what good is until they experience it in the Millennium, as a result of their redemption by him who will then be their Judge and King.

The moral sense, or judgment of right and wrong, and the liberty to use it, which Adam possessed, were important features of his likeness to God. The law of right and wrong was written in his natural constitution. It was a part of his nature, just as it is a part of the divine nature. But let us not forget that this image or likeness of God, this originally law-inscribed nature of man, has lost much of its clear outline through the erasing, degrading influence of sin; hence it is not now what it was in the first man.

Ability to love implies ability to hate; hence we may reason that the Creator could not make man in his own likeness, with power to love and to do right, without the corresponding ability to hate and to do wrong. This liberty of choice, termed free moral agency, or free will, is a part of man's original endowment; and this, together with the full measure of his mental and moral faculties, constituted him an image of his Creator. Today, after six thousand years of degradation, so much of the original likeness has been erased by sin that we are not free, being bound, to a greater or less extent, by sin and its entailments, so that sin is now more easy and therefore more agreeable to the fallen race than is righteousness.

That God could have given Adam such a vivid impression of the many evil results of sin as would have deterred him from it, we need not question, but we believe that God foresaw that an actual experience of the evil would be the surest and most lasting lesson to serve man eternally; and for that reason God did not prevent but permitted man to take his choice, and to feel the consequences of evil. Had opportunity to sin never been permitted, man could not have resisted it, consequently there would have been neither virtue nor merit in his right-doing. God seeketh such to worship him as worship in spirit and in truth. He desires intelligent and willing obedience, rather than ignorant, mechanical service. He already had in operation inanimate mechanical agencies accomplishing his will, but his design was to make a nobler thing, an intelligent creature in his own likeness, a lord for earth, whose loyalty and righteousness would be based upon an appreciation of right and wrong, of good and evil.

The principles of right and wrong, as *principles*, have always existed, and must

always exist; and all perfect, intelligent creatures in God's likeness must be free to choose either, though the right principle *only* will forever continue to be active. The Scriptures inform us that when the activity of the evil principle has been permitted long enough to accomplish God's purpose, it will forever cease to be active, and that all who continue to submit to its control shall forever cease to exist. (1 Cor. 15:25,26; Heb. 2:14) Right-doing and right-doers, only, shall continue forever.

But the question recurs in another form: Could not man have been made acquainted with evil in some other way than by experience? There are four ways of knowing things, namely, by intuition, by observation, by experience, and by information received through sources accepted as positively truthful. An intuitive knowledge would be a direct apprehension, without the process of reasoning, or the necessity for proof. Such knowledge belongs only to the divine Jehovah, the eternal fountain of all wisdom and truth, who, of necessity and in the very nature of things, is superior to all his creatures. Therefore, man's knowledge of good and evil could not be intuitive. Man's knowledge might have come by observation, but in that event there must needs have been some exhibition of evil and its results for man to observe. This would imply the permission of evil somewhere, among some beings, and why not as well among men, and upon the earth, as among others elsewhere?

Why should not man be the illustration, and get his knowledge by practical experience? It is so: man is gaining a practical experience, and is furnishing an illustration to others as well, being "made a spectacle to angels."

Adam already had a knowledge of evil by information, but that was insufficient to

restrain him from trying the experiment. Adam and Eve knew God as their Creator, and hence as the one who had the right to control and direct them; and God had said of the forbidden tree, "In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die." They had, therefore, a theoretical knowledge of evil, though they had never observed or experienced its effects. Consequently, they did not appreciate their Creator's loving authority and his beneficent law, nor the dangers from which he thereby proposed to protect them. They therefore yielded to the temptation which God wisely permitted, the ultimate utility of which his wisdom had traced.

Few appreciate the severity of the temptation under which our first parents fell, nor yet the justice of God in attaching so severe a penalty to what seems to many so slight an offense; but a little reflection will make all plain. The Scriptures tell the simple story of how the woman, the weaker one, was deceived, and thus became a transgressor. Her experience and acquaintance with God were even more limited than Adam's, for he was created first, and God had directly communicated to him before her creation the knowledge of the penalty of sin, while Eve probably received her information from Adam. When she had partaken of the fruit, she, having put confidence in Satan's deceptive misrepresentation, evidently did not realize the extent of the transgression, though probably she had misgivings, and slight apprehensions that all was not well. But, although deceived, Paul says she was a transgressor-- though not so culpable as if she had transgressed against greater light.

Adam, we are told, unlike Eve, was not deceived (1 Tim. 2:14), hence he must have transgressed with a fuller realization of the sin, and with the penalty in view, knowing

certainly that he must die. We can readily see what was the temptation which impelled him thus recklessly to incur the pronounced penalty. Bearing in mind that they were perfect beings, in the mental and moral likeness of their Maker, the godlike element of love was displayed with marked prominence by the perfect man toward his beloved companion, the perfect woman. Realizing the sin and fearing Eve's death, and thus his loss (and that without hope of recovery, for no such hope had been given), Adam, in despair, recklessly concluded not to live without her. Deeming his own life unhappy and worthless without her companionship, he wilfully shared her act of disobedience in order to share the death-penalty which he probably supposed rested on her. Both were "in the transgression," as the Apostle shows. (Rom. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:14) But Adam and Eve were one and not "twain"; hence Eve shared the sentence which her conduct helped to bring upon Adam. Rom. 5:12,17-19

God not only foresaw that, having given man freedom of choice, he would, through lack of *full* appreciation of sin and its results, accept it, but he also saw that, becoming acquainted with it, he would still choose it, because that acquaintance would so impair his moral nature that evil would gradually become more agreeable and more desirable to him than good. Still, God designed to *permit evil*, because, having the remedy provided for man's release from its consequences, he saw that the result would be to lead him, through experience, to a full appreciation of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin" and of the matchless brilliancy of virtue in contrast with it--thus teaching him the more to love and honor his Creator, who is the source and fountain of all goodness, and forever to shun that which brought so much woe and misery. So the final result will be greater love for God, and greater hatred of

all that is opposed to his will, and consequently the firm establishment in everlasting righteousness of all such as shall profit by the lessons God is now teaching through the permission of sin and correlative evils. However, a wide distinction should be observed between the indisputable fact that God has permitted sin, and the serious error of some which charges God with being the author and instigator of sin. The latter view is both blasphemous and contradictory to the facts presented in the Scriptures. Those who fall into this error generally do so in an attempt to find another plan of salvation than that which God has provided through the *sacrifice* of Christ as our ransom-price. If they succeed in convincing themselves and others that God is responsible for all sin and wickedness and crime,\* and that man as an innocent tool in his hands was forced into sin, then they have cleared the way for the theory that not a sacrifice for our sins, nor mercy in any form, was needed, but simply and only JUSTICE. Thus, too, they lay a foundation for another part of their false theory, viz., universalism, claiming that as God caused all the sin and wickedness and crime in all, he will also cause the deliverance of all mankind from sin and death. And reasoning that God willed and caused the sin, and that none could resist him, so they claim that when he shall will righteousness all will likewise be powerless to resist him. But in all such reasoning, man's noblest quality, liberty of will or *choice*, the most striking feature of his likeness to his Creator, is entirely set aside; and man is theoretically degraded to a mere machine which acts only as it is acted upon. If this were the case, man, instead of being the lord of earth, would be inferior even to insects; for they undoubtedly have a will or power of choice. Even the little ant has been given a power of will which man, though by his greater power he may oppose and thwart, cannot destroy.

\*Two texts of Scripture (Isa. 45:7 and Amos 3:6) are used to sustain this theory, but by a misinterpretation of the word *evil* in both texts. Sin is always an evil, but an evil is not always a sin. An earthquake, a conflagration, a flood or a pestilence would be a calamity, an *evil*; but none of these would be sins. The word *evil* in the texts cited signifies *calamities*. The same Hebrew word is translated *affliction* in Psa. 34:19; 107:39; Jer. 48:16; Zech. 1:15. It is translated *trouble* in Psa. 27:5; 41:1; 88:3; 107:26; Jer. 51:2; Lam. 1:21. It is translated *calamities*, *adversity*, and *distress* in 1 Sam. 10:19; Psa. 10:6; 94:13; 141:5; Eccl. 7:14; Neh. 2:17. And the same word is in very many places rendered *harm*, *mischief*, *sore*, *hurt*, *misery*, *grief* and *sorrow*.

In Isa. 45:7 and Amos 3:6 the Lord would remind Israel of his covenant made with them as a nation--that if they would obey his laws he would bless them and protect them from the calamities common to the world in general; but that if they would forsake him he would bring calamities (evils) upon them as chastisements. See Deut. 28:1-14,15-32; Lev. 26:14-16; Josh. 23:6-11,12-16.

When calamities came upon them, however, they were inclined to consider them as accidents and not as chastisements. Hence God sent them word through the prophets, reminding them of their covenant and telling them that their calamities were from him and by his will for their correction.

It is absurd to use these texts to prove God the author of sin, for they do not at all refer to sin.

True, God has power to force man into either sin or righteousness, but his Word declares that he has no such purpose. He could not consistently force man into sin for the same reason that "he cannot deny himself." Such a course would be inconsistent with his righteous character, and therefore an impossibility. And he seeks the worship and love of only such as worship him in spirit and in truth. To this end he has given man a liberty of *will* like unto his own, and desires him to *choose* righteousness. *Permitting* man to choose for himself led to his fall from divine fellowship and favor and blessings, into death. By his experience in sin and death, man learns practically what God offered to teach him theoretically, without his experiencing sin and its results. God's foreknowledge of what man would do is not used against him, as an excuse for degrading him to a mere machine-being: on the contrary, it is used in man's favor; for God, foreseeing the course man would take if left free to choose for himself, did not hinder him from tasting sin and its bitter results experimentally, but he began at once to provide a means for his recovery from his first transgression by providing a Redeemer, a great Savior, able to save to the uttermost all who would *return unto God* through him. To this end--that man might have a free *will* and yet be enabled to profit by his first failure in its misuse, in disobedience to the Lord's will--God has provided not only a *ransom* for all, but also that a knowledge of the opportunity thus offered of reconciliation with himself shall be testified to all in due time. 1 Tim. 2:3-6

The severity of the penalty was not a display of hatred and malice on God's part,

but the necessary and inevitable, final result of evil, which God thus allowed man to see and feel. God can sustain life as long as he sees fit, even against the destructive power of actual evil; but it would be as impossible for God to sustain such a life everlastingly, as it is for God to lie. That is, it is *morally impossible*. Such a life could only become more and more a source of unhappiness to itself and others; therefore, God is too good to sustain an existence so useless and injurious to itself and others, and, his sustaining power being withdrawn, destruction, the natural result of evil, would ensue. Life is a favor, a gift of God, and it will be continued everlastingly only to the obedient.

No injustice has been done to Adam's posterity in not affording them each an individual trial. Jehovah was in no sense bound to bring us into existence; and, having brought us into being, no law of equity or justice binds him to perpetuate our being everlastingly, nor even to grant us a trial under promise of everlasting life if obedient. Mark this point well. The present life, which from the cradle to the tomb is but a process of dying, is, notwithstanding all its evils and disappointments, a boon, a favor, even if there were no hereafter. The large majority so esteem it, the exceptions (suicides) being comparatively few; and these our courts of justice have repeatedly decided to be mentally unbalanced, as otherwise they would not thus cut themselves off from present blessings. Besides, the conduct of the perfect man, Adam, shows us what the conduct of his children would have been under similar circumstances.

Many have imbibed the erroneous idea that God placed our race on trial for life with the alternative of *eternal torture*, whereas nothing of the kind is even hinted at in the penalty. The favor or blessing of God to his

obedient children is life--continuous life--free from pain, sickness and every other element of decay and death. Adam was given this blessing in the full measure, but was warned that he would be deprived of this "gift" if he failed to render obedience to God--"In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die." He knew nothing of a *life* in torment, as the penalty of sin. Life everlasting is nowhere promised to any but the obedient. Life is God's gift, and death, the opposite of life, is the penalty he prescribes.

Eternal torture is nowhere suggested in the Old Testament Scriptures, and only a few statements in the New Testament can be so misconstrued as to appear to teach it; and these are found either among the symbolisms of Revelation, or among the parables and dark sayings of our Lord, which were *not understood* by the people who heard them (Luke 8:10), and which seem to be but little better comprehended today. "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18:4

Many have supposed God unjust in allowing Adam's condemnation to be shared by his posterity, instead of granting each one a trial and chance for everlasting life similar to that which Adam enjoyed. But what will such say if it now be shown that the world's opportunity and trial for life will be much more favorable than was Adam's; and that, too, *because* God adopted this plan of permitting Adam's race to share his penalty in a natural way? We believe this to be the case, and will endeavor to make it plain.

God assures us that as condemnation *passed upon* all *in* Adam, so he has arranged for a new head, father or life-giver for the race, into whom all may be transferred by faith and obedience and that

as all *in* Adam shared the curse of death, so all *in* Christ will share the blessing of restitution; the Church being an exception. (Rom. 5:12,18,19) Thus seen, the death of Jesus, the undefiled, the sinless one, was a complete settlement toward God of the sin of Adam. As one man had sinned, and all in him had shared his curse, his penalty, so Jesus, having paid the penalty of that one sinner, bought not only Adam, but all his posterity--all men-- who by heredity shared his weaknesses and sins and the penalty of these--death. Our Lord, "the *man* Christ Jesus," himself unblemished, approved, and with a perfect seed or race in him, unborn, likewise untainted with sin, gave his *all* of human life and title as the full *ransom-price* for Adam and the race or seed in him when sentenced.

After fully purchasing the lives of Adam and his race, Christ offers to adopt as his seed, his children, all of Adam's race who will accept the terms of his New Covenant and thus by faith and obedience come into the family of God and receive everlasting life. Thus the Redeemer will "see *his seed* [as many of Adam's seed as will accept *adoption*, upon his conditions] and prolong his days [resurrection to a higher than human plane, being granted him by the Father as a reward for his obedience]," and all in the most unlikely way; by the sacrifice of life and posterity. And thus it is written: "As all in Adam die, *even so* all in Christ shall be made alive." *Corrected translation*, 1 Cor. 15:22

The injury we received through Adam's fall (we suffered no injustice) is, by God's favor, to be more than offset with favor through Christ; and all will sooner or later (in God's "due time") have a full opportunity to be restored to the same standing that Adam enjoyed before he sinned. Those who do not receive a full knowledge and, by

faith, an enjoyment of this favor of God in the present time (and such are the great majority, including children and heathen) will assuredly have these privileges in the next age, or "world to come," the dispensation or age to follow the present. To this end, "all that are in their graves...shall come forth." As each one (whether in this age or the next) becomes fully aware of the ransom-price given by our Lord Jesus, and of his subsequent privileges, he is considered as on trial, as Adam was; and obedience brings lasting life, and disobedience lasting death--the "second death." Perfect obedience, however, without perfect ability to render it, is not required of any. Under the Covenant of Grace, members of the Church during the Gospel age have had the righteousness of Christ imputed to them by faith, to make up their unavoidable deficiencies through the weakness of the flesh. Divine Grace will also operate toward "whosoever will" of the world during the Millennial age. Not until physical perfection is reached (which will be the *privilege* of all before the close of the Millennial age) will absolute moral perfection be expected. That new trial, the result of the ransom and the New Covenant, will differ from the trial in Eden, in that in it the acts of each one will affect only his own future.

But would not this be giving some of the race a *second* chance to gain everlasting life? We answer--The *first* chance for everlasting life was lost for himself and all of his race, "yet in his loins," by father Adam's disobedience. Under that original trial "condemnation passed upon all men"; and God's plan was that through Christ's redemption-sacrifice Adam, and *all* who lost life in his failure, should, after having tasted of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and felt the weight of sin's penalty, be given the opportunity to turn unto God through faith in the Redeemer. If any one chooses to call

this a "second chance," let him do so: it must certainly be Adam's second chance, and in a sense at least it is the same for all of the redeemed race, but it will be the first *individual* opportunity of his descendants, who, when born, were already under condemnation to death. Call it what we please, the facts are the same; viz., all were sentenced to death because of Adam's disobedience, and all will enjoy (in the Millennial age) a *full opportunity* to gain everlasting life under the favorable terms of the New Covenant. This, as the angels declared, is "Good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." And, as the Apostle declared, this grace of God--that our Lord Jesus "gave himself a *ransom for all*"--must be "testified" to all "in due time." (Rom. 5:17-19; 1 Tim. 2:4-6) Men, not God, have limited to the Gospel age this chance or opportunity of attaining life. God, on the contrary, tells us that the Gospel age is merely for the selection of the Church, the royal priesthood, through whom, during a succeeding age, all others shall be brought to an accurate knowledge of the truth and granted full opportunity to secure everlasting life under the New Covenant.

But what advantage is there in the method pursued? Why not give all men an individual chance for life now, at once, without the long process of Adam's trial and condemnation, the share by his offspring in his condemnation, the redemption of all by Christ's sacrifice, and the new offer to all of everlasting life upon the New Covenant conditions? If evil must be permitted because of man's free moral agency, why is its extermination accomplished by such a peculiar and circuitous method? Why allow so much misery to intervene, and to come upon many who will ultimately receive the gift of life as obedient children of God?

Ah! that is the point on which interest in this subject centers. Had God ordered differently the propagation of our species, so that children would not partake of the results of parental sins--weaknesses, mental, moral and physical-- and had the Creator so arranged that all should have a favorable Edenic condition for their testing, and that transgressors only should be condemned and "cut off," how many might we presume would, under all those favorable conditions, be found worthy, and how many unworthy of life?

If the one instance of Adam be taken as a criterion (and he certainly was in every respect a sample of perfect manhood), the conclusion would be that none would have been found perfectly obedient and worthy; because none would possess that clear knowledge of and experience with God, which would develop in them full confidence in his laws, beyond their personal judgment. We are assured that it was Christ's knowledge of the Father that enabled him to trust and obey implicitly. (Isa. 53:11) But let us suppose that one-fourth would gain life; or even more, suppose that one-half were found worthy, and that the other half would suffer the wages of sin--death. Then what? Let us suppose the other half, the obedient, had neither experienced nor witnessed sin: might they not forever feel a curiosity toward things forbidden, only restrained through fear of God and of the penalty? Their service could not be so hearty as though they knew good and evil; and hence had a full appreciation of the benevolent designs of the Creator in making the laws which govern his own course as well as the course of his creatures.

Then, too, consider the half that would thus go into death as the result of their own wilful sin. They would be lastingly cut off

from life, and their only hope would be that God would in love remember them as his creatures, the work of his hands, and provide another trial for them. But why do so? The only reason would be a hope that if they were re-awakened and tried again, some of them, by reason of their larger *experience*, might then choose obedience and live.

But even if such a plan were as good in its results as the one God has adopted, there would be serious objections to it.

How much more like the wisdom of God to confine sin to certain limits, as his plan does. How much better even our finite minds can discern it to be, to have but one perfect and impartial law, which declares the wages of wilful sin to be death--destruction--cutting off from life. God thus limits the evil which he permits, by providing that the Millennial reign of Christ shall accomplish the full extinction of evil and also of wilful evil-doers, and usher in an eternity of righteousness, based upon full knowledge and perfect free-will obedience by perfect beings.

But there are two other objections to the plan suggested, of trying each individual separately at first. One Redeemer was quite sufficient in the plan which God adopted, because only *one* had sinned, and only *one* had been condemned. (Others shared *his* condemnation.) But if the first trial had been an individual trial, and if one-half of the race had sinned and been individually condemned, it would have required the sacrifice of a redeemer for each condemned individual. One unforfeited life could redeem one forfeited life, but no more. The one perfect man, "the man Christ Jesus," who redeems the fallen Adam (and our losses through him), could not have been "a ransom [a corresponding price] for ALL"

under any other circumstances than those of the plan which God chose.

If we should suppose the total number of human beings since Adam to be one hundred billions, and that only one-half of these had sinned, it would require all of the fifty billions of obedient, perfect men to die in order to give a *ransom* [a corresponding price] for all the fifty billions of transgressors; and so by this plan also death would pass upon all. And such a plan would involve *no less* suffering than is at present experienced.

The other objection to such a plan is that it would seriously disarrange God's plans relative to the selection and exaltation to the divine nature of a "little flock," the body of Christ, a company of which Jesus is the Head and Lord. God could not justly *command* the fifty billions of obedient sons to give their rights, privileges and lives as ransoms for the sinners; for under his own law their obedience would have won the right to lasting life. Hence, if those perfect men were asked to become ransomers of the fallen ones, it would be God's plan, as with our Lord Jesus, to set some special reward before them, so that they, for the joy set before them, might endure the penalty of their brethren. And if the same reward should be given them that was given to our Lord Jesus, namely, to partake of a new nature, the divine, and to be highly exalted above angels and principalities and powers, and every name that is named--next to Jehovah (Eph. 1:20,21), then there would be an immense number on the divine plane, which the wisdom of God evidently did not approve. Furthermore, these fifty billions, under such circumstances, would all be on an *equality*, and none among them chief or head, while the plan God *has adopted* calls for but one Redeemer, one highly exalted to the divine nature, and then a "little flock" of

those whom he redeemed, and who "walk in his footsteps" of suffering and self-denial, to share his name, his honor, his glory and his nature, even as the wife shares with the husband.

Those who can appreciate this feature of God's plan, which, by condemning all in *one* representative, opened the way for the ransom and restitution of all by *one* Redeemer, will find in it the solution of many perplexities. They will see that the condemnation of *all* in one was the reverse of an injury: it was a great favor to *all* when taken in connection with God's plan for providing justification for *all* through another one's sacrifice. Evil will be forever extinguished when God's purpose in permitting it shall have been accomplished, and when the benefits of the ransom are made co-extensive with the penalty of sin. It is impossible, however, to appreciate rightly this feature of the plan of God without a full recognition of the sinfulness of sin, the nature of its penalty--death, the importance and value of the *ransom* which our Lord Jesus gave, and the positive and complete restoration of the individual to favorable conditions, conditions under which he will have full and ample trial, before being adjudged worthy of the reward (lasting life), or of the penalty (lasting death).

In view of the great plan of redemption, and the consequent "restitution of all things," through Christ, we can see that blessings result through the permission of evil which, probably, could not otherwise have been so fully realized.

Not only are men benefited to all eternity by the experience gained, and angels by their observation of man's experiences, but all are further advantaged by a fuller acquaintance with God's character as manifested in his plan. When

his plan is fully accomplished, all will be able to read clearly his wisdom, justice, love and power. They will see the justice which could not violate the divine decree, nor save the justly condemned race without a full cancellation of their penalty by a willing redeemer. They will see the love which provided this noble sacrifice and which highly exalted the Redeemer to God's own right hand, giving him power and authority thereby to restore to life those whom he had purchased with his precious blood. They will also see the power and wisdom which were able to work out a glorious destiny for his creatures, and so to overrule every opposing influence as to make them either the willing or the unwilling agents for the advancement and final accomplishment of his grand designs. Had evil not been permitted and thus overruled by divine providence, we cannot see how these results could have been attained. The permission of evil for a time among men thus displays a far-seeing wisdom, which grasped all the attendant circumstances, devised the remedy, and marked the final outcome through his power and grace.

During the Gospel dispensation sin and its attendant evils have been further made use of for the discipline and preparation of the Church. Had sin not been permitted, the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus and of his Church, the reward of which is the divine nature, would have been impossible.

It seems clear that substantially the same law of God which is now over mankind, obedience to which has the reward of life, and disobedience the penalty of

death, must ultimately govern all of God's intelligent creatures; and that law, as our Lord defined it, is briefly comprehended in the one word, *Love*. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27) Ultimately, when the purposes of God shall have been accomplished, the glory of the divine character will be manifest to all intelligent creatures, and the temporary permission of evil will be seen by all to have been a wise feature in the divine policy. Now, this can be seen only by the eye of faith, looking onward through God's Word at the things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began--the restitution of all things.

#### The Day is at Hand

"Poor, fainting pilgrim, still hold on thy way--  
the dawn is near!

True, thou art weary now; but yon bright ray  
becomes more clear.

Bear up a little longer; wait for rest;  
Yield not to slumber, though with toil  
oppressed.

"The night of life is mournful, but look on--the  
dawn is near!

Soon will earth's shadowed scenes and forms be  
gone; yield not to fear!

The mountain's summit will, ere long, be gained,  
And the bright world of joy and peace attained.

"'Joyful through hope' thy motto still must be--  
the dawn is near!

What glories will that dawn unfold to thee! be of  
good cheer!

Gird up thy loins; bind sandals on thy feet:  
The way is dark and long; the end is sweet."