

*“you shall be my witnesses”*

# Sharing Your FAITH

**The 3 M's of Witnessing**

**The Messenger  
The Message  
The Method**

**Gordon C. Olson**

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Present edition 2022: Rhema Productions  
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# Why this new "Sharing Your Faith" Manual?

## Why this new "Sharing Your Faith" Manual?

It was in 1974 that I first heard of the Teaching of the Moral Government of God. I had been a Christian for about 10 years and had been deeply involved in Christian Activities, gone through Bible School and had come to Spain as a Missionary to Serve Him.

This concept immediately caught my attention. It was very different to what I had heard before. It was quite revolutionary. The next year, 1975, My wife and I had the opportunity of attending a YWAM, Seminar by Winkie Pratney from New Zealand, who simplified the Moral Government concept and that's when, I began to fully understand the Nature, the Character and the Ways of God. For the first time I began to see what a Wonderful God, I had discovered. He wasn't a demanding and an inflexible law giver. All this was life changing - My life truly began to Change.

In 1978, My wife and I, we had the privilege of attending a Youth With A Mission, School of Evangelism, in Lausanne, Switzerland. Here we sat under Mr Gordon Olson's ministry and go through a 30 hour teaching series with the "Sharing Your Faith" Study Manual. The Manual was very dense and "reader unfriendly" but the content was completely revolutionary and life changing. Our lives and our service for Him took a 180° turn and it's never been the same.

The Study Manual presentation didn't do justice to the caliber of teaching and truth it contained and that's the reason why, we have decided to present this Study Manual in a "reader friendly" format.

Since it was so dense and difficult to read, I suspect very few people have read this Study Manual completely. When reading the Manual (which I've had to do quite a few times in preparation for this project), I can still hear the passion with which Mr Olson presented this teaching which he had prayerfully prepared for over 40 years, and where he had received the revelation and a glimpse into the compassionate and loving heart of God and how much it cost the Trinity to pave the path of Redemption. The Redemption Plan was designed the moment the Godhead decided to create Man in His own Image and Likeness. Since we were created totally autonomous and independent, we have total freedom to obey or disobey. Each decision carries it's own consequences. Since we disobeyed, God had to execute His plan of Redemption with it's gruesome consequences so that we would be restored to communion with our loving Creator.

May you receive His revelation as you seek to know Him in all His Love, Goodness and Greatness.

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# Preface

- *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Lk 19:10).
- *“We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God ”* (2 Co 5:20).
- *“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news”* (Is 52:7, Ro 10:15).
- *“He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, Shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him”* (Ps 126:6).
- *“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy”* (1 Th 2:19-20).
- *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Mk 8:36-37).

The Lord Jesus viewed the winning of one soul as of such great value that all the possessions of the world would not balance it. He spent a great deal of His time speaking to one person at a time about his soul's welfare. Somewhere in the winning of every soul there must be a personal contact, Christ came to put God on exhibition, as the word *declared* tells us in (Jn 1:18).

He so lived the needs of men in His bosom that He was easily moved to tears: *“Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd”* (Mt 9:36).

**Men are confronted with eternal issues which shall doom their souls. The Lord Jesus has gone on to heaven in the resurrection triumph and has left us as His only witnesses.**

*“As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”* (Jn 20:21). *“And you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). To be reconciled to God is not to enter into a manner of life which is superhuman or not adapted to our human existence, in which we cannot experience the normal relations and functions of life. It is rather to enter into a state of life in which we live out our intended relationships with God and man in all true intelligence and wisdom. Holiness is simply intelligence applied to our various relations in proper proportion and esteem. *“in Him we live and move and exist”* (Acts 17:28). *“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Co 10:31).

Salvation is not a partial reconciliation to God or a partial transformation of heart which leaves part of our personality unconquered and unsatisfied. It is rather a full reconciliation to God in

blessed fellowship and a full transformation of life, refereed to in the New Testament as being "*born again (or from above)*" (Jn 3:3-7). Certainly such a forceful analogy stresses a grand climactic experience that is to take place in a total revolution of our manner of living. This spiritual transformation extends to our whole personalities and is accomplished only with man's consent and participation. Man is not dead to spiritual reality or to the reality of the existence of God. Man is disturbed and has a guilt complex in a state of restlessness because he knows that he is not fulfilling his known relationships with a Supreme Being nor living rightly with his fellow men. Man may thus be reasoned with or persuaded to repent and embrace the Gospel.

When the Scripture commands "*all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30), from Old Testament times (Is 55:6-7, Eze 18:30-32) through our Lord's words (Mk 1:14-15, Lk 13:3,5) unto the Apostle Paul in the full development of "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:21, 24, 26:18-20), it nowhere says that man is unable to renounce his own selfish ways and turn to God. We cannot partly repent and partly not repent, or be partly selfish and partly not selfish at the same time. We either receive all the truth of God that we are convinced of, or we do not. If God would accept a partial repentance and do a partial work of grace in our hearts, there would have to be a reason for this partiality or incompleteness which a God of love and grace is unable to find. God desires to bless man to the fullest extent of His created capacities. God has planned that we should enter through the door of repentance and faith into the most glorious experience of our lives, in which we are actually cleansed from our sins and filled with vital Divine life. This spiritual transformation takes place upon a full committal of faith in the atoning death of Christ, into which climax only the penitent are led. We know that we have repented and exercised saving faith by the resulting experience.

We shall see in our present study that man's transformation is a cooperative enterprise of three agencies:

- **Supremely**, the agency or activity of the Holy Spirit,
- **Secondarily**, the voluntary agency and fervent prayers of Christian witnesses, and,
- **Thirdly**, the necessary agency and response of the subject.

The Word of God, particularly Gospel truth, is the instrument or medium of all persuasive activity and resulting response. Repentance and the saving faith which follows is man's personal response to this Divine and human persuasion, based upon his natural discoveries and upon the Word of God which enlightens man as to his moral responsibilities and reveals the truths of the blessed Gospel. The Holy Spirit brings convicting power with great energy (Jn 16:8-11). We are more than mere instruments that God uses to further His work, "*For we are God's fellow workers*" (1 Co 3:9). We are active voluntary agents who are to go forth in the name of the Lord "*... divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses*" (2 Co 10:4), "*He that wins souls is wise*" (Prov 11:30).

All who are owned by the Lord Jesus are to be His ambassadors. We do not give God our time, God owns our time if Jesus is our Lord and Saviour, "*Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*", "*Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own*" (1 Co 6:19-20). It "*is Christ in you, the hope of glory*"

(Col 1:27). *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"* said Paul after he had been conquered by the risen Christ (Phil 1:21). *"You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you"* said the greatest Friend that ever walked the earth (Jn 15:14). If we are to represent Christ we must take on His spirit and compassion. We must take time to be *"with him"* before He can send us *"forth to preach"* (Mk 3:13-15). We must be motivated by His love. It must become a living reality to us and continually constrain us (2 Co. 5:14). **We can lead others no further than we have come ourselves.**

We are not to go forward in our own strength, *"for without me you can do nothing"* said the Saviour (Jn 15:5). We must go forward in the promised anointing and power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8, 4:13, 6:10). But we must go forth, for unto us is committed *"the keys of the kingdom of heaven"* (Mt 16:19). We alone have the keys to men's hearts with whom we come in contact. They are in our hands. We have the responsibility. We are *watchmen* for God and are to *"hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me"* (Ezq 3:17). *"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some"* said the Apostle Paul (1 Co 9:22).

Who can in the least fathom the Divine grief over man's sin and stupid persistent rebellion? Who can properly put himself in the mind and heart of the tender and compassionate Saviour as He traverses the earth in His resurrected glory, with all humility knocking at the heart's door of mere men seeking admittance and the opportunity of blessing them, only to be generally turned away (Re 3:20)? **Sin is the unspeakable tragedy of the universe.**

The Word of God expresses with mournful Divine regret that all men are not responding to God's universal overtures of mercy (Is 55:1-3, Eze 18:30-32, Mt 23:37, 1 Tim 2:3-4, 2 Pe 3:9). The outflow of tender Divine love and compassion is limited by man's created sovereignty over his own actions, which God will not violate (Ps 78:41). While on earth our blessed Lord enlightened men with *"the light of life"* (Jn 8:12, 12:35) and confronted men with a force of persuasion as never before. His conclusion was simple but painful and remorseful, *"You will not come to me, that you might have life"* (Jn 5:40).

Our developed depravity or sinful tendencies become a strong persuasive force for evil, but we ourselves in our innermost personalities, our wills, have the God-given ability to choose and perpetuate sinful rebellion or insubordination, or renounce it in an energetic climax in breaking down and turning to God. **Men cannot blame anyone but themselves for their lost estate and their impenitent condition.**

Shall we as God's own *"dear children"* (Ep 5:1-2) follow the admonition of our Blessed Lord, *"Occupy till I come"* (Lk 19:13)? Shall we in that great day when *"we must, all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"* (2 Co 5:10) hear the words, *"Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master"* (Mt 25: 23).

**Now is the day of opportunity and challenge to impart our glorious Gospel.**

**Gordon C. Olson**  
Franklin Park, Illinois, USA  
June, 1968



# 1

# The Messenger

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## **The Messenger Must represent the Resurrected and Living Christ (Mt 5:14)**

- *"You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14).*
- *"You are all the children of light, and the children of the days we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1Th 5:5).*
- *"Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).*
- *"Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Co 7:1).*
- *"Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim 2:1).*
- *"... let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. . . ." (He 12:1-2).*

The Lord Jesus said concerning His plan of life *"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mt 20:28). Through utter stupidity and gruesome rebellion Adam and Eve isolated their hearts from their great loving Creator and Benefactor and became spiritually bankrupt. The grieved and broken-hearted God in great manifestation of love had to begin a long process of moral enlightenment in an endeavour to awaken man to his moral relations and responsibilities. The ultimate purpose in view was a full reconciliation of man to a state of forgiveness and happy relationship with the Godhead and with his fellow men. A Divine atonement for sin became necessary. This profound measure was progressively unfolded by prophecies and typified by the institution of animal sacrifices.

A groundwork of truth had to be established among mankind, which was simply the application of true intelligence to man's moral relations. A nation was called into being to represent God to the world of lost men. This nation was to be a depository of truth and provide a channel through which the Saviour might come to accomplish His mission of enlightenment and atoning sacrifice. A great step forward was the giving of a system of laws or helpful regulations through Moses, involving primarily a system of animal sacrifices for sin and particularly the moral law or Ten Commandments.

As great and blessed as this revelation of law was, it fell far short of manifesting the loving and compassionate heart of the Godhead. Man needed a perfect tangible manifestation of the moral character of God - something he could behold in the atmosphere of life's struggles. Thus it was that:

*"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world" (He 1:1-2).*

*"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth (or the grace and the truth, in its fullest measure) came (or came into being) through Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time (in His essential essence); the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him" (Jn 1:17-18).*

The word *declared* is very graphic. It means to unfold, narrate, lead out, make known - literally, to exegete, to interpret or explain, Christ, then, by His life, deeds, profound teachings, and broken-hearted suffering unto death for sin, put God on exhibition before rebellious man and made salvation possible.

The Lord Jesus knew that His time on earth was short and that He must delegate to others the responsibility of spreading the glad tidings to all men after His accomplished death for sin and resurrection. Of the many disciples who followed Him at the beginning of His ministry He, therefore, after much prayer, made choice of twelve *"that they should be with him, and that He might send forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils"* (Mk 3:14-15). He spent most of His time instructing them in *"the mysteries of the kingdom of God"*.

He said, *"I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life"* (Jn 8:12). It would soon be true that His disciples would be the only moral light that the world would know.

Viewing their extreme importance to the blessing of mankind, our Lord with great earnestness prayed to the Father *"that they may be one, even as we are"* (Jn 17:11). This spiritual oneness would be the only way that mankind would believe in the advent of the Saviour and the blessings of salvation (Jn 17:23). Mankind must learn of the tender love and compassion of the Godhead. The only way that this could be achieved was by the disciples of the Lord to be filled with His love and manifest it to others (Jn 17:26). They were to be *"the salt of the earth"* (Mt 5:13) and manifest the sweet savor of the love of God to all men.

## What is Witnessing?

**To witness is to represent something or someone with our whole personality.**

It is impossible to say anything without manifesting how we feel or are reacting toward what we are saying. Our Lord denounced the religiously - strict Pharisees as hypocritical, *"for they*

*say, and do not*" (Mt 23:3). He said that they were right in what they said, but not in what they did. Thus while their words pointed one way, their actions pointed the opposite way and negated their witness.

We are so wonderfully constituted that our whole personality enters into our thoughts and actions. God has created us with the ability of reason or thought. This intelligence also has the ability to imagine or form mental pictures of the various things we think about. This is particularly true concerning the existence of God as relating to us. Our mentality cannot help making comparisons of our actions with our knowledge as to how we ought to act. Thus we have conscience, which commends or condemns. So that our lives can advance to higher thought accomplishments, our mentality was given the ability to store our former thoughts and actions, which we call memory. These complicated mental processes enter into every thought, expression, and action, without our being aware of it. It is extremely difficult to deceive ourselves as to our actual state and more difficult yet to deceive others. When James wrote, "*But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves*" (Jas 1:22), he seems to imply that we cannot really deceive others.

If our thought life is extremely difficult or actually impossible to totally misrepresent, so more so our emotional life or reactions, God did not want our lives to be dull or uninteresting. Therefore He created the ability of reaction within our consciousness so that we would have an experience with everything we think upon. This we call feeling or emotion. These reactions involve physical sensations of pleasure or pain. The conscience also approves or disapproves what is being felt and the memory records the tempo of such reactions to give a more or less permanent pleasure or pain.

The lie detector functions because of man's remarkable constitution. It depends upon the activity of conscience as relating to over emotional nature and our physical reactions. If we say what our conscience affirms is not true, there is an actual physical change brought about through our emotions which delicate instruments indicate to the scientific observer. Man is "*fearfully and wonderfully made*"(Ps 139:14). God has embedded secret weapons within man which man is never quite the master of.

The field of personality interpretation or discovery has become a very specialized one, with rash claims being made as to how much of ourselves we unwittingly manifest in whatever we do. Some say that our hand writing manifests our personality. Others our walking and carriage. Others look for mannerisms and peculiarities to reveal things that we are endeavouring to cover up. Tests are devised to reveal emotional balance or temper control under critical situations. The scrutinizers are trained to look beyond what is apparent on the surface for in-depth discoveries. It is not so much that they discover reactions that the untrained observer is unaware of, but that they dissect and segregate various character traits that the untrained observer does not take the pains to analyse.

We all are far more observing and are influenced by the total manifestations of our fellow men than we suppose we are. The total image or impression of words, facial expressions, bodily manifestations, and the timing of events are automatically fed into our personal "computer" to use modern terminology, which gives instant reactions of favourable or unfavourable in various degrees. From these remarks we can readily conclude that we cannot be any kind of an effective

witness for our blessed Lord unless we are willing to be genuine and whole hearted in our inner lives.

## We must be like Christ

**Thus to represent Christ in any true sense we must be Christ-like in motive and conduct.**

To be Christ-like is not to manifest perfect conduct in all the relations of life, but to be humble and genuine as Christ was. It is to have *an honest and good heart*, which the master-teacher likened to *good ground* that brought forth "*fruit with patience*" (Lk 8:15). It is to be "*perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Mt 5:48), as the Lord commanded. This perfection which is to characterize the children of God can only refer to a perfection of motive. It could not possibly refer to a perfection of conduct. Perfect conduct requires perfect knowledge of all that is involved or can result from every action. This knowledge we will never possess since we will always be finite creatures. Absolute perfection of conduct is reserved only to God, who alone possesses infinite understanding of all relations and reactions.

Human perfection of conduct must always be relative since it depends upon the state of our knowledge and ability. **Perfection of motive or intention, on the other hand, may be absolute in that we may purpose with all our heart to live in a disposition of love.**

Virtuous love places the welfare and happiness of God supreme in our lives in true worship and happy service, and that of our fellow men equal with our own. The Apostle Paul revealed the inner secret of his life in the words "*In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men*" (Acts 24:16). In other words, he was ruled by a voluntary attitude of love up to the limit of his intelligence of what actions were right and proper. He intended to do no one harm. He had no malicious intentions motivating his actions. His rule was to "*...be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ*" (Phil 1:10).

We are always being influenced by the motives which others manifest to us. It is remarkable how obvious are the motives of our hearts in all our actions to those who are impartial enough to evaluate them honestly. Virtuous motives always shine out even to those who are prejudiced and hateful towards us. Courts of justice are intent upon learning whether a certain crime was premeditated and planned, and if so for how long. Lesser guilt is attached if it was believed to have been committed on the spur of the moment. Thus when men honestly seek to evaluate the moral character of their fellow men, they look through the particular action to the motive behind it and interpret the action by the motive. Even animals seem to be able to interpret motive. Often they will attack or defend themselves against the approach of one and be friendly to another.

In interpreting motive we automatically make some evaluation of the understanding of persons and form some concept as to whether they really knew better or not. We also evaluate something of their present circumstances. What would receive favourable or passive acceptance in one situation would not in another. If we really believe a person was ignorant of a wrong action, we exonerate such, but not for long for there ought to be an increase in knowledge as to what



a right action is in a given instance. The Apostle Peter wrote: *“like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord (the Word of God), that you may grow thereby: if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious”* (1 Pe 2:2-3). This growth will be a growth *“in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* (2 Pe 3:18). It will be a growth in understanding as to how we ought to act in the various situations that we meet, a growth in our sense perception *“who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil”* (He 5:14). It is that our *“love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment”* (Phil 1:9).

*“The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”* (Acts 11:26). This term was probably originated by Gentile unbelievers who had to admit that those who claimed to be Christ’s followers were in truth so in their daily lives, *“Let every one who names the name of Christ abstain from wickedness”* (2 Tim 2:19).

The true Christian consistency which alone can qualify us to be the Lord’s witnesses must consist in keeping ourselves *“in the love of God”* (Jude 21), or in maintaining through dependence upon the Holy Spirit an intelligent balanced attitude of love toward God and toward our fellow men. This will always involve an aggressive reaching out for an ever-increasing perfection of conduct in all the events of life.

To be effective witnesses for Christ we must live above the common failings of life so that unbelievers will take notice and ask us what the secret of our life is. It is then that the *“reason of the hope that is in you”* (1 Pe 3:15) can be given with great force. Men must be able to become *“followers of us, and of the Lord”* (1 Th 1:6) at the same time. We must live such lives that we can say: *“The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you”* (Phil 4:9). *“In order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example”* (2 Th 3:7-9).

Think of the victory over sin that the Apostle Paul daily experienced when he could say: *“Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me”* (1 Co 4:16). This was not boastfulness but was founded upon the witness of the Holy Spirit as the source of his strength: *“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ”* (1 Co 11:1). The Apostle John later wrote: *“No one who abides in Him, (the resurrected and living Christ in glory) sins”* (1 Jn 3:6). This was the secret of Paul’s life that enabled him to be a leader of those who *“turned the world upside down”* for their Saviour (Acts 17:6). Like Moses, he lived *“as seeing Him who is unseen”* (He 11:27).

## A Continuous Transformation

### **To be Christ-like, we must be transformed continually by the indwelling Holy Spirit in a humble walk of faith**

The Christian life was not intended to be a set of regulations which we are to try to live by, but an intimate spiritual relationship with the resurrected and glorified Christ. It is to be *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col 1:27). This relationship was intended to be so profound that it is called *“the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known . . . as it has now*

*been revealed*" (Ep 3:4-5). It is a blessed state of being *under grace*. The main characteristic is that *"sin shall not be master over you"* (Ro 6:14).

The Saviour's love was to mean so much to those partaking of salvation that *"the love of Christ"* would be constraining them on in this now happy life (2 Co 5:14). This is the life real and genuine as God had created it. This life is Christ-like because it is the living Christ manifesting His resurrected life within the inner sanctum of the heart (2 Co 3:18). It is buoyant and energetic because it is quickened by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

To maintain this Christ-like life in happy and effective service to God and man, there appears to be three things that must continually engage our concentrated attentions:

## **Fleeing from all Indulgence**

**We must continually turn away from every obviously sinful and injurious indulgence, confessing and being forgiven and cleansed from every sin.**

*"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me"* said the Saviour (Lk 9:23). *"I am dying daily"*, wrote the Apostle Paul (1 Co 15:31) (a present tense). When we first came to Christ in salvation, we repented of everything that hurt the heart of the loving God, that hurt ourselves and our fellow men. The New Testament knows no salvation while continuing in a state of sinful indulgence. Sin as a manner of life is always referred to in the past tense in the Christian. *"Such were some of you; but you were washed, . . ."* (1 Co 6:11). *"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived . . ."* (Tit 3:3). If we have never turned from all known sin in repentance and come to the Saviour in a full committal of faith for the forgiveness of sins, we have never experienced salvation. God in great love desires to bless man with great abundance of spiritual life and happiness. Man's rebelliousness and past sin stands in the way. Man agrees fully to turn from all rebellion and be intelligently submissive to his loving Creator. Man is forgiven all through faith in Christ's atoning death and fully reconciled to God. There is no other way, no half-hearted way. God would not be loving if He planned and permitted anything less.

But, sadly enough, sin has a way of working itself into our hearts again if we are not watchful. We face struggles of life which challenge us. We are in contact with endless temptation to go back and follow the ways of the world again, or at least in part. Within us memories of sin often are aroused and Satan helps to paint a false picture of gratification. The pangs of sin have been mostly forgotten because of the sweet grace and mercy of God in forgiving and cleansing us. James uses such words as tempted, drawn away, enticed, conceived and brings forth to describe the encroachments of sin, which without any qualification he said *"brings forth death"* (Jas 1:14-15). This departure may be in the secret recesses of our hearts or may become external and involve others. In such a state of defeat, effective witnessing for Christ is impossible.

The tender admonition has been sent forth to God's erring children: *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Co 7:1). Thank God for the promise: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 Jn 1:9). The grieved Holy Spirit takes the initiative to bring us back into peace of conscience and

fellowship again, but unless we respond to His tender pleadings we are paralysed as far as any spiritual service is concerned. Is it not highly embarrassing, to say the least, for anyone to plead with another to give up sinful indulgences to be saved when not willing himself to do so? This is so obviously inconsistent that no further comment should be necessary.

## Stay Away from any Questionable Activity

**We must also turn away from questionable and unprofitable activities if we are to be effective witnesses for our Master.**

Speaking of being *"a good soldier of Jesus Christ"*, the Apostle Paul illustrated this separated life by referring to the necessity of being relieved from the common duties of life for army service. *"No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier"* (2 Tim 2:4). There are many things that do not appear to be sinful in themselves, but we may soon find ourselves so engrossed in them that little time will be left for devotion and service to Christ.

This is what the Lord Jesus meant by the words of the parable of the sower: *"The worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful"* (Mk 4:19). Christians simply must follow the rule, or the urgent work of the Gospel will be crowded out by seemingly legitimate things. This must ever be a watchful activity, warding off projects and activities before they master us.

The Apostle Paul likened the uses we are making of our lives to the various uses that are being made of vessels or household utensils that make up the equipment of a large house. There are vessels of gold, silver, wood and clay. Some have elevated or honourable uses and some lowly or dishonourable, *"if anyone cleanses himself from these things (from what is ignoble and unclean), he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified, useful (or highly useful) to the Master, prepared for every good work"* (2 Tim 2:21). The word *purge* is an emphatic verb indicating a climax when we thrust or cleanse out of our lives every dishonourable use of our beings. We notice that it is we ourselves who must renounce all evil or unworthy actions. It will do no good to pray to God to take away what we are unwilling to let loose of. When we come to the Lord Jesus in humble penitence and faith, a miracle of the grace of God takes place. We are sanctified or purified from the inward damage of our wrongful indulgences and are brought into a state of deliverance to become highly useful to our blessed Master.

We have the twofold forsaking of sinful indulgences and hindrances to Christian service in the words *"let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"* (He 12:1). The verb involves a climax in our actions and might be rendered: *"Having put off from yourselves"*. The picture is that of an athlete preparing to run a race. What would we think of a runner attempting to win a race with a hundred pound weight strapped to his back? The idea of *weight* here must be that of any encumbrance, burden or hindrance which would slow us down and make it impossible to win the race.

As mentioned, things seemingly not sinful in themselves may occupy our efforts and work their way into our affections to limit our usefulness for God. There must also be the putting off of

*"the easily-besetting sin"* or that particular form of sinful gratification which has received the greatest development in our lives. This form of selfish indulgence surrounds us more than any other and cleverly seeks to bring about our defeat. The figure is that of entangling our feet and preventing or retarding our running.

## Continually looking to Jesus

**We must learn the secret of continually *Looking unto Jesus* for blessed spiritual victory over every temptation and hindrance to happy Christian service.**

In this passage (He 12:1-2) we have two present tenses that are the key to spiritual victory. **First**, *"Let us run"* or *"with endurance the race that is set before us"*. Idleness is the pathway to defeat. To set our minds upon pleasing God and serving our fellow men, and to keep endlessly at it is the first step. *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Ro 12:21), But in our *running* we are, **Secondly**, to be continually *"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith"*. This is a very simple concept but very difficult to learn. It is natural for us to fight sin in our own strength. This is what the Galatian Christians did. Thus the Apostle Paul wrote: *"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"* (Gal 3:3). He then admonished them *"walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh"* (Gal 5:16).

One of the most graphic promises of spiritual victory is found in the commands: *"do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"* (Ro 12:2). Or we might render the passage: *"Do not keep on conforming yourselves to (or fashioning yourselves to the pattern of) this age, but be (continually) transformed (transfigured or changed into another form) by the renewal (or renovation) of the mind"*. This same word *transformed* was used concerning the Lord Jesus when He was *transfigured* before Peter, James and John on the mountain (Mt 17:2), when *"His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light"*. This same verb occurs also in 2 Corinthians 3:18, where the secret of spiritual liberty or deliverance is embodied in the words *"We all, with unveiled face beholding for ourselves as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being (continually) transformed (or transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit of the Lord"*. Thus it is the personal manifestation of the resurrected and glorified Christ within our minds through the indwelling Holy Spirit, that is to revolutionize and sustain our lives.

This blessed state of happy Christian service is the crowning provision of *"of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you"* (Ep 3:2, 6), in which it is our privilege to live. We are now confronted with the constraining love of Christ as to whether we will take the *"yoke"* of our blessed Lord upon us day by day (Mt 11:29) and *"prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"* (Ro 12:2). The Master could say, *"My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"* (Mt 11:30), because He has promised to be with us always (Mt 28:20) and grant us the blessed fellowship of His great heart of love and spiritual enlightenment, as He walks and talks *"with us by the way"* (Lk 24:32).

## **The MESSAGE Must Present God's Revealed Truth and Gospel (1 Tim 2:3-6)**

- *"Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pe 1:21).*
- *"The law was given by (or through) Moses, but grace and truth came by (or through) Jesus Christ" (Jn 1:17).*
- *"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his (Christ's) name among all nations" (Lk 24:47).*
- *"The gospel which was preached of me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, but I received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Ga 1:11-12).*
- *"The gospel of Christ . . . for it is the power of God for salvation to every one that believes" (Ro 1:16).*

If we are going to represent any business organisation and be an effective part of the enterprise, we must spend enough time at headquarters to learn the secrets of the product and under what conditions business is to be transacted. No firm allows its sales force to choose their own terms. Often these terms are arbitrarily established by the company, based upon what the public will take and can be changed when necessity arises. But salesmen must always present what is currently authorised. The Word of God lays down specific explanations as to how sin came about and what God has done and proposes to do in our individual lives concerning it. The wonderful thing in the domain of God is that everything is final and permanent, since everything God does is based upon absolute love and wisdom. God has taken the initiative in devising and bringing to pass a way by which man could be reconciled back to Himself. There are certain unalterable conditions which Divine intelligence has dictated must take place. God has taken great pains in the progressive revelations of the Bible to bring man into agreement with truth and to win back his allegiance. Can anything be more important to the happiness of God, to ourselves and to others than that we understand exactly what has to happen in reconciliation and what the conditions are if those glorious bounties are to become effective? We can either exert our efforts against what the Holy Spirit is seeking to do, or be positive and cooperate with His sacred efforts to bless mankind, according to our knowledge of the Divine proceedings.

## Man According to the New Testament

**Man has lost all true perspective of life in its eternal relations to God and to his fellow men.**

The New Testament describes man as:

- Alienated from God (Ep 4:18).
- Blind (Jn 12:40, 2 Co 4:4, 1 Jn 2:11).
- Carnally or fleshly minded (Ro 8:6, 13).
- Corrupt (Mt 7:17-18; 1 Tim 6:5).
- Darkened (Mt 6:23, Jn 3:19, Ro 1:21, Ep 4:18, 1 Jn 1:6-7).
- Dead in sin (Jn 5:24, Ro 8:6, Col 2:13, 1 Tim 5:6, 1 Jn 3:14).
- Deceived (Tit 3:3).
- Defiled or filthy (Is 64:6, Tit 1:15, 2 Pe 2:20, Re 22:11).
- Destitute of truth (Ro 1:18, 25, 1 Tim 6:5).
- Disobedient (Mt 7:23, Ep 2:2, Tit 3:3).
- An enemy of God (Jas 4:4).
- Evil (Mt 6:22, 12:33-35, Jn 3:20).
- Foolish (Mt 7:26, Ep 5:15, Tit 3:3).
- Going astray (1 Pe 2:25).
- Hateful (Tit 3:3).
- Hypocritical (Mt 6:2, 5, 16, 23:13, 28).
- Impenitent (Ro 2:5, He 3:8).
- Malicious and envious (Tit 3:3).
- Natural or soulish (1 Co 2:14).
- Pleasure or world-loving (2 Th 2:12, 1 Tim 5:6, 2 Tim 3:4, Tit 3:3, 1 Jn 2:15).
- Proud (Ro 1:30, 1 Tim 6:4, 2 Tim 3:2, 4, Jas 4:6, 1 Pe 5:5).
- Refusing belief (Jn 3:36, Tit 1:15).
- Rejecting truth (2 Tim 4:4).

- Resisting God (Acts 7:51).
- Guided by Satan (Jn 8:44, Ep 2:2).
- Loving himself (2 Tim 3:2).
- Self-satisfied (Re 3:17).
- A slave of sin (Jn 8:34, Ro 16:16-17, 20, Tit 3:3).
- Subordinating God (Ro 1:25).
- Unconscious of bondage (Jn 8:33, Ro 7:7).
- Unrighteous (1 Co 6:9, Re 22:11).
- And vain in his imaginations (Ro 1:21).

**These many descriptions leave no question that man needs a colossal awakening and a complete re-evaluation of his entire life** (Ep 5:14).

Man has forsaken truth in his sinful rebellion. He has *“exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever”* (Ro 1:25). He is living in *“the error of his way”* (Jas 5:20) and loves *“darkness rather than light”* (Jn 3:19-21). On the other hand, *“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”* (1 Jn 1:5). *Light* and *darkness* are figurative expressions referring to a manner of life that is either right or wrong, to one that will stand up to intelligent investigation or one that will not. Any plan of reconciliation must bring about such moral enlightenment in the minds of repentant sinners that they shall be purged from concepts of error and be made to realise what is the only true life before God. Man must *“come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim 2:4) concerning himself and concerning God.

To be saved is not only to submit to truth, but to receive *“the love of the truth”* (2 Th 2:10). It is to be doing *“truth”* (Jn 3:21). It is to worship *“in spirit and in truth”* (Jn 4:24). It is to have *“the spirit of truth”* take up His abode with us (Jn 14:17, 1 Co 6:19, Ro 8:9). He who came to introduce *“grace and truth”* in a fuller measure (Jn 1:17) and said that He was *“the way, the truth, and the life”* (Jn 14:6), declared that *“the truth shall make you free”* (Jn 8:32). Peter wrote that salvation involved a purifying *“your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit”* (1 Pe 1:22), and James that the new birth was by means of *“the word of truth”* (Jas 1:18). Certainly there is no salvation except by a re-entry into the realm of truth by sincere repentance from the *fables* to which man has turned. *“What partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”* (2 Co 6:14). Man must *“cast off the works of darkness and . . . put on the armour of light”* (Ro 13:12). Man must begin to *“walk honestly, as in the day”* (Rom 13:13). Thus any plan of reconciliation must uncover error and bring man to a true perspective of life by an experimental realisation of truth. Man must cease to reject his natural discoveries (Ro 1:18-20) by being willing to conform his life to them. Man must return to *“the way of truth”* (2 Pe 2:2).

From these many Scriptures we can form some concept as to how far mankind have departed from that happy sphere of life for which they were created and what revolutionary change must take place. God had to begin this long process of enlightenment directly to receptive individuals and bring about the advent and sufferings of His blessed Son, as recorded in the Bible. There came to be written 39 books in what comprises the Old Testament or the Old Covenant, written by about 30 authors over a period of about 1100 years. The great climax was the giving of the moral law, the Ten Commandments, in the wilderness of Sinai. *"Moses went up unto God"* upon the Mount (Ex 19:1, 3). *"God spoke all these words"* (Ex 20:1), also prescribing a sacrificial system of mercy and worship which the nation Israel was to formally adhere to, although sacrificial offerings had been practised since the days of Adam and Eve. In addition, God gave to Moses many civil or social laws for the benefit of the nation Israel as they lived before the nations of the world.

The New Testament, comprising 27 books written by 8 authors over a period of less than 50 years and covering a period of time of about 100 years, records the greatest series of events in man's history - the advent and accomplished atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the culmination of man's enlightenment. *"Never man spoke like this man"* the officers had to admit. *"Grace and truth"* were brought to light. After His atoning sufferings and resurrection, He commissioned His disciples to go forth with the glad tidings of God's great condescension and abounding mercy (Mt 28:18-20, Mk 16:15-18, Lk 24:46-48, Jn 17:18, 20:21). The Apostle Paul was given a direct commission (Ga 1:11-12) as *"the apostle of the Gentiles"* (Ro 11:13). This blessed Gospel would bring results in the lives of all who submit to it. *"It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"* (Ro 1:16). God's servants are to *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth"* (2 Tim 2:15).

It is fundamental in Biblical interpretation that the words used in the Bible be interpreted by their usage in various other places in the Bible and not be pressed to extreme or detailed meanings that were not intended. In other words, the Bible must be permitted to be its own interpreter or modifier of meanings. This is particularly true of analogies or figures of speech that were brought in to enliven the text, which were especially used by the Lord Jesus. Generally these illustrations were meant to convey one prominent idea. If we ponder the details of each illustration and attempt to incorporate our findings into the Biblical meaning, we may go beyond what was intended to be taught and have difficulty fitting other Scriptures into our so-called new discoveries. The Bible is God's plain message to the lowly and the simple (Mt 11:25-26) and was not intended to require great scholarship to arrive at its essential message. Each sincere servant of Christ faces the sifting process as he seeks to discern God's mind and message. The anointing of the Holy Spirit has been promised to guide us (1 Jn 2:27), in fulfilment of the Saviour's words (Jn 16:12-15).



# 3

# God's Nature and Character

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## **GOD'S NATURE AND CHARACTER as revealed in the Bible**

- *"I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God"* (Is 45:5).
- *"The high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy"* (Is 57:15).
- *"O my God . . . , Your years are throughout all generations. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end"* (Ps 102:24-27).
- *"God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all"* (1 Jn 1:5).
- *"God is love; and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him"* (1 Jn 4:8, 16).
- *"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come"* (Re 4:8).
- *"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns"* (Re 19:6).

The foundation of all knowledge and experience of God is the acceptance of all the evidence that our minds have been confronted with in our natural observations of ourselves and our surroundings. The idea of cause and effect is deeply ingrained in every moral being. In every task performed we instinctively recognise that the result is the product of what we have done. We observe endless profound objects and arrangements which neither we or other beings like ourselves could possibly originate and sustain. Since we know that intricacies of design do not come about by chance, we are driven to the conclusion that there is a Creator and Sustainer of all the profound and great things that we observe.

This Being must be awesomely great - greater and more powerful than the energy displayed in the universe. Endless mysteries and adaptations demand that we recognise a great Designer of profound intelligence and knowledge, with unlimited capacities of wisdom. Endless beauties and satisfying experiences incorporated into all areas of design testify to the aesthetic and benevolent nature of the Designer. Goodness is manifested on every hand. No basic appetite or capacity has been created without provision for wholesome fulfilment. Absolute regularity of operations and functions indicate the precision and faithfulness of the Originator and Sustainer of all things.

The producer cannot be identical with the product. Therefore, the Designer must be distinct from and above the resulting design. The mystery of self-consciousness by which we perceive ourselves to be above the physical body which we inhabit and control, helps us to recognise a similar spiritual mystery in the Divine Being existing separately from the physical product. Our innate God-consciousness, the helper of the faithful and the disturber of the rebellious, greatly aids the mind in these conclusions and is the foundation of the concept of the spiritual existence of ourselves and that of the great Being of God.

We are conscious of our limitations of location and duration of life. Our great Creator and Sustainer must not be so limited, but must inhabit all space that exists and has been the sphere of Creative activity and must have unending duration to have initiated and perpetuated long cycles of events.

Many inconsistencies and antagonisms to this beautiful and profound arrangement of created existence are observed to exist. Disappointments, sorrows, injustices, struggles, hardships, sufferings, fears, and the future gloom of death and retribution are experienced. Nature appears often unfriendly and sometimes intolerable. Creatures of all sizes are antagonistic to us and to each other. However, our consciences affirm that we have been guilty of rebelling and perpetuating a moral revolution against our intelligence, of refusing to live our lives in supreme recognition of the Divine Being and the obvious rights of our fellow men. The whole mass of humanity appear to have joined in and perpetuated this rebellion. Thus we might expect, that there would be radical Divine reactions to man's refusal to conform to God's loving and wise moral government and that just consequences were being meted out by a dutiful Moral Governor. This would involve the whole creation of which man is the centre. Man's consciousness of guilt does, therefore, exonerate the Creator from hasty charges of deficiencies and directs man to concentrate upon the positive aspects of his wonderful discoveries (Ro 2:14-16).

The Scriptures in the strongest terms substantiate these firm convictions with which all moral beings are confronted and make their rejection the basis of condemnation. For example, the Psalmist wrote: *"I give thanks to You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Ps 139:14). *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands"* (Ps 19:1). More literally, the first part may be rendered *"The heavens are declaring to their utmost, or are actively engaged in proclaiming the glory of God"*. Jeremiah wrote about the power, wisdom, and discretion of God as he pondered his observations (Jer 10:12). The Apostle Paul summed up the effects upon all men by these things which are *"clearly seen, . . . His eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse"* (Ro 1:19-20). That all men universally affirm the existence of a Creator based on their natural observations is attested to by the universal prevalence of religious exercises among peoples who have not heard of Biblical revelation. Some of the tortures involved testify to their deep feeling of guilt, which can only spring from great moral light.

**The Bible was not given to prove the existence of God, but to reveal profound facts concerning the God that man already knows to exist from his natural observations and experiences.** God has condescended to reveal inner secrets of His Being, as unfolded in compassionate redemption, in the hopes of winning man back into the happy fellowship for which he was created. We should be everlastingly grateful for this impartation of the greatest of all knowledge to lead us further toward a state of absolute confidence in the Divine character.

## The Trinity

The Godhead are revealed in the Bible as a Trinity of personal spiritual Beings, living in an eternal duration of time who have the ability of intellectual activity, who experience emotional reactions, and who possess moral freedom, or the power of self-determination or free will.

### A Trinity of Personalities

A Trinity of Personalities, of equal endowments and attributes, who are in absolute oneness of purpose and activity, designated Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Ep 4:4-6.

#### 1. Old Testament

While the Old Testament emphasises the unity of God, as distinguished from the belief of pagan nations in a great multitude of gods, there are clear references to a plurality of Persons in the Godhead and some that point to this plurality as a Trinity.

(a) Plural nouns and pronouns are applied to God:

Ge 1:1 Ge 1:26 Ge 3:22 Ge 11:7 Ge 48:15 Is 6:8

(b) Distinctions are made in the Godhead that would be uncalled for apart from a plurality of Divine Persons:

Ge 1:1-2 Ge 6:3 Ge 19:24 Nu 6:24-26 Ps 2:7 (Jn 3:16, 18)  
Ps 51:11 Is 6:3 Is 63:9-11 Hos 1:6-7 Zech 2:10-11

#### 2. New Testament

In the New Testament we find the threefold personality of the Godhead emphatically asserted.

(a) **The Trinity of the Godhead are associated together at:**

- i. Our Lord's Baptism (Lk 3:21-22).
- ii. In the bestowal of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son (Jn 14:16-17, Acts 2:32-33).
- iii. In the Baptismal Formula (Mt 28:19).
- iv. In the Ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 12:4-6).
- v. In the Apostolic Benediction (2 Co 13:14).
- vi. The Father is distinguished from the Lord Jesus (Jn 17:5, 18) and from the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:26-27).

(b) **Each of the Members of the Trinity are called God or claimed full Deity:**

- i. The Father very frequently:

Jn 6:27 1 Co 8:6 Ga 1:1 Ga 1:3

ii. The Son, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Lk 4:12    Jn 1:1      Jn 1:18    Jn 5:17-18    Jn 10:30    Jn 10:33  
 Jn 20:28    1 Co 8:6    Col 2:9    Tit 2:13      He 1:8      2 Pe 1:1

iii. The Holy Spirit:

Acts 5:3-4    1 Co 2:10-11    Ep 2:22    He 9:14

## Divine Unity of Personalities

Ex 20:3, Dt 4:35, 39, 6:4 (the Hebrew word *one* here used properly means *united* and can denote a compound unity, Mk 12:29-30), Is 44:6, Jn 10:30, 17:21-23, Jas 2:19.

Evidently from the foregoing, it is proper to refer to the Godhead in both the plural and the singular. The plural is proper because there are three Personalities so distinct that they may perform specific functions and actions separately. And yet there is a profound unity between the Members of the Godhead. Evidently this is a compound unity, as in Ge 1:1 and 1:26, where the plural *Elohim* for God acted together in creation in such a manner that a singular verb could be used. We must, it appears, lean away from an elementary concept of unity into the realm of compound unity.

This is permissible from Old Testament usage, and is especially supported by our Lord's own words in His High Priestly prayer (Jn 17:11, 21-23). He likened the unity subsisting between Himself and the Father to the most intimate of all human relations, the spiritual oneness between Himself and the true church, called "*the body of Christ*" (1 Co 12:27), and between fellow-believers by virtue of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 12:13), they were one in heart, purpose, and life, while yet remaining separate individuals. The concept of salvation is elevated thereby and the profound nature of the glorious Trinity somewhat exposed to our limited vision.

## Spiritual in essence

The Godhead are spiritual in essence, not corporeal or having a physical existence. Spiritual is a reality, a distinct entity or substance which could be seen if we were able to endure such great revelation (Ex 33:20). The Lord Jesus referred to the Godhead as having *shape* or *form* (Jn 5:37). David expressed hope of beholding the *face* and *form* of God (Ps 17:15).

1. God's essential spiritual nature is immaterial: Jn 4:24 "*God (is) Spirit*", Col 1:15 "*The invisible God*", 1 Tim. 1:17, He 11:27, Lk 24:39.

We cannot now understand how personal identity can exist in a purely spiritual realm and must depend upon our own spiritual consciousness, implanted by the creative hand of God, that we exist apart from our material bodies (Lk 16:22-31, 2 Co 5:1-8, Phil 1:21-24). Similarly, God exists apart from material substance and is to be contacted through our spiritual consciousness (Mt 6:6, Jn 4:23-24, Acts 17:24-29, Ro 8:16). We have this common basis of spiritual understanding, since we were created in the *image* and *likeness*

of God (Ge 1:26). In our present sphere of life *"we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Co 5:7), *"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"*, said the Lord Jesus (Jn 20:29).

2. The essential Being of the Godhead never has and cannot be seen by our earthly material consciousness: Jn 1:18, 1 Tim 6:15-16, 1 Jn 4:12.

God's intimate servants or spiritual leaders have been favoured by unspeakable manifestations of the Divine essence: As Abraham (Ge 12:7, 17:1-3, 18:1-3, 13), Jacob (Ge 32:30), Moses (Ex 24:9-11, 33:11, 18-23, Nu 12:6-8, *form or likeness*), Gideon (Jud 6:11-12, 21-22), Samson's parents (Jud 13:6, 21-22), Isaiah (Is 6:1, 5, Jn 12:41), Stephen (Acts 7:54-56), Paul (1 Co 9:1, 2 Co 12:1-4), John, the Apostle (Re 1:12-18).

The designations, *the angel of the Lord* and *the angel of God*, appear in some of the above passages and in a number of other places in the Old Testament (as Ge 22:11-12, 15-18, Ex 3:2-6, 14:19-20). The Hebrew word rendered *angel* means messenger. These designations are thought to refer to the Lord Jesus in His pre-incarnate eternal existence, as they have reference to the actions of Deity and yet there are distinctions in the Godhead (as Is 63:9-10). *"The Angel of the Lord is the visible Lord God of the Old Testament, as Jesus Christ was of the New Testament"* (Amp. O.T.).

3. Since God has no material essence, no external images are to be made to represent the Divine Being: Ex 20:4.
4. In the resurrection the redeemed shall receive *"a spiritual body"* (1 Co 15:44-45) in *"conformity with the body of His glory"* (Phil 3:21), *"we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is"* (1 Jn 3:2-3). We now have our *natural (or soulish) body* and see spiritual realities *"in a mirror dimly"* (1 Co 13:12) and thus must *"walk by faith"*. Evidently when we receive our *spiritual body* a whole new realm of spiritual perception will dawn. The heavenly life will be busy and happy in the direct exploration of spiritual reality *"then face to face"*, *"His servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face"* (Re 22:3-4). The resurrected and glorified Christ now has a tangible spiritual body (Lk 24:39), *"the first fruits of them that slept"* (1 Co 15:20). Thus there has been a change in the manifestations of the Godhead since the Incarnation, *"because I live, you will live also"*, said the Saviour in anticipation of His resurrection (Jn 14:19).

## Living in an endless duration of time

**The Godhead are living in an endless duration of time and have successions of thoughts, experiences, and volitions, or a chronology of events, in their existence, as set forth in the following passages:**

1. Those describing the Godhead as living in a succession of time:

Is 57:15 Ps 95:10-11 Ps 102:24-27 Zeph 3:5 Zech 1:12 He 13:8  
Re 1:8

2. Those referring to the Godhead as engaging in the process of reasoning and decision, inviting man to join in this process: Ge 1:26-27, Is 1:18, 55:8-9, Jer 29:11, 44:21-22.

Our only concept of reasoning is the process of thinking one thought after another in a succession of time and coming to a conclusion, which we did not have at the beginning of the process. There is no hint in the Scriptural record that God is not actually thinking along with us in the same process of time that we are living in. Duration or succession is absolutely imperative to the reasoning process. Our ability to think is just as worthless without a duration of time to act in as an automobile would be without a road to operate upon.

3. The Godhead are represented as experiencing emotional reactions of pleasure, grief, and indignation in accordance with man's attitude and conduct:

Ge 6:5-6      Ge 22:12      Ps 78:38      Ps 78:56-61      Ps 95:10-11      Is 12:1  
Eze 16:42-43      Micah 7:18-19      Zeph 3:17      Zech 1:12-16      Lk 15:7, 10

These verses, among many others, show the variableness of Divine experiences in the duration of time, in response to man's treatment of God's love and blessings. Great climaxes of happy and grievous reactions are often involved as God observes man's obedience and extreme rebellions. God controls His vindictive emotions and manifests wrath only in righteous judgment in His responsibility as the Moral Governor of the Universe.

4. **The Godhead are said to perform specific actions at definite periods or instants in a succession of time:**

Ge 2:3    Ex 20:11    Ex 31:17    Dt 2:25    Josh 10:14    He 4:4

Allow God to exist in a duration or succession of time, so that He can have new thoughts, make new decisions, perform acts of unspeakable wisdom, and then look back upon His works and have Divine complacency that they are "*very good*" and be "*refreshed*" by contemplation, and all is natural and highly exciting.

5. God is said to be exerting continual care and oversight over those in happy submission to Him, making observations, reacting thereto, and planning their protection: Dt 11:12, 23:14, 1 Kgs 22:19, 2 Chr 16:9.

They were to live their lives in realisation that their God was constantly watching their behaviour. God's loving presence could only be a reality if they continued in purity of life and devotion.

6. The Godhead have made decisions to do certain things or have made changes in Their plans, as a result of making certain observations of man's condition, rebellion, or change of attitude in humiliation and prayers:

Ge 6:5-7      Ex 2:23-25      Ex 32:7-14 (fervent intercession of Moses)  
Nu 11:1-2      Dt 9:18-19, 25      1 Sam 15:10-11, 23, 35  
2 Kg 13:3-5    2 Kg 19:16, 20, 28      Jonah 3:10  
Jonah 4:2

Allow the Godhead to be living in a duration of time and we have graphic accounts of God's reactions against rebellion, and His sympathetic and moving response to humbleness and repentance. Prayer actually moves a compassionate God, who is concerned with our welfare, and changes things.

In one instance we have in true sequence: A dire need, humiliation before God, earnest petition, God having heard the prayer and considering the situation, God's reactions, deliverance, and judgement upon the enemy.

**7. The incarnation of the Lord Jesus into humanity brought about changes and experiences in the interpersonal relations of the Godhead which cannot be conceived of apart from a succession of time or a true chronology of events:**

Jn 1:1-2, 14    Jn 6:38    Jn 8:42    Jn 12:23, 28    Jn 16:27-28    Jn 17:4-5  
 Jn 17:11-12    Jn 20:17    Acts 2:32-33    Ga 4:4-5    Phil 2:5-11    Re 3:20-21

There was an eternal duration of past time when the Triune Members of the Godhead had Their perfect fellowship together before the Second Person took upon Himself a catastrophic change of existence through His incarnation by way of the Virgin Birth. Then there was a period of time when the Son of God as the Son of Man "*tabernacled among us*" in the special endowment of the Holy Spirit and in sacred prayer fellowship with the Father. Then there was the second greatest event in the history of mankind, second only to creation, when the Saviour in His lonely atoning sufferings said, "*It is finished*". Then subsequently resurrection life and ascension introduced a change into the very realm of the Godhead - a God-man in the heavens, ever living "*to make intercession*". How can anyone in simple-mindedness conceive of such immense interpersonal changes in the essential nature and experiences of the Godhead without allowing a true chronology of succession in the Divine existence? These tremendous facts confound philosophical speculations.

**8. The Holy Spirit began His special earthly activity in the present age at a distinct point of time, involving interpersonal events in the experiences of the Godhead: Jn 7:39, 14:16-17, 26, 16:7-8, Acts 1:5, 2:1-4, 33 Ep 3:2-6.**

Jn 7:39    Jn 14:16-17, 26    Jn 16:7-8    Acts 1:5    Acts 2:1-4,33    Ep 3:2-6

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, is the executive agent in bringing to pass the programme of God on earth, particularly as regards man's salvation and the communication of the will of God to man. In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit came upon selected individuals at selected times to reveal truth, guide, and energise in bestowing spiritual gifts. Profound changes were to be made in the Gospel age, in that a new intimate spiritual relationship with the resurrected and glorified Christ was to be established through the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. New profound blessings and manifestations were to be the common experience of those reconciled to God. This new *era of the grace of God* could not be bestowed until the advent, atoning death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. Thus we have a specific point of time in the durative experiential life of the Godhead when these new manifestations of the Holy Spirit began, "*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper*" said the Lord

Jesus concerning that then future time of accomplishment (Jn 14:16). Obviously there is a genuine chronology in the experiences of the Godhead. Frequent reference is made in the New Testament to another distinct point in time when these blessed privileges shall be terminated in a future climax of judgement.

9. God is represented as having made many decisions concerning distant plans which He expects to bring to pass in the process of time, representing them as future in His own activity:

Ge 3:15	Ge 12:1-3	1 Sam 2:35	Is 7:14	Dan 2:44
Acts 1:7 ( <i>"authority"</i> )	Acts 1:11	Acts 15:14-17	Acts 17:31	Ep 1:10
1 Pe 1:10-12	Re 1:1			

See also: 2 Tim 1:9-10 and Tit 1:2 (*"before age times"* or *"long ages ago"* lit., *"before times eternal"*)

These passages have been selected to represent long distant plans that God the Father has made in His era of love and mercy toward mankind. Because of man's rebellion and persistence in wickedness, God has had to modify His plans and also pursue periods of Justice and judgment as a righteous Moral Governor. These plans are general in scope, although they often involve many details, and do not necessarily involve a knowledge of all that shall develop or be decided upon in the course of time. They indicate that God the Father has taken forethought, experienced reactions, and has made decisions in a past duration of time, and has declared many future events which He has determined to bring to pass in His great mercies and regulation of world affairs.

**The theological dogma that God is an "eternal now" or that time or succession is not an element in the Divine existence, is evidently a philosophical rather than a Biblical concept**

In the Bible, God is presented as a living Being who walks or dwells with men, performs definite acts at definite times, who rests, observes, thinks and is reasoned with, remembers, is grieved, is jealous, is provoked to anger and then causes His wrath to rest, is moved with compassion, who forgives and comforts, delights and rejoices, listens to men, repents, changes His plans, makes new decisions, etc. These various acts, states of mind, or experiences obviously conflict and cannot coexist at the same instants, and thus require the chronological element of time for their occurrence. God is *"the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose years are throughout all generations"* and which *"shall have no end"*.

When one endeavours to show how a God who is timeless or an "eternal now", or who does not have a succession of actions or events in His basic existence, can make a choice in time which is not a reality to enter into a succession of time and bring about a chronology of thoughts, reactions, decisions, and actions, which were always being experienced in His timeless existence, grave complications arise which the plain and simple record of Scripture appears to know nothing about. An "eternal now" God would not have a duration of time to make choice in to enter into a duration or chronology.



## Possessing the abilities of personality

The Godhead are represented in the Bible as possessing the abilities of personality. Man is said to have been created in the *"image"* and *"likeness"* of God as to his spiritual or immaterial nature his essential personality (Ge 1:26-27). **Our analysis of our own abilities of personality, therefore, will aid greatly in understanding the nature of the great Divine Personalities.**

We shall see in our discussion of man's constitution that we are not to think of ourselves as having *spirit* and *soul* segments that can act independently, but rather that we are whole personalities with functions or abilities and act as a complete unit in all that we do. We evaluate personality, therefore, in terms of what such a being is able to do. Personalities have the mysterious ability to originate action and are not controlled by some causation acting upon the will. To be able to make a decision for action, there must be the ability of reason or intelligence, which enables one to have a mental picture of a proposed action in a perspective of our moral relations. The mind works with the will in the development of action in the process of reasoning. The will directs the mind to think upon a certain action and the process of analysis has a reflex action back to the will as to whether the process begun is to be pursued further. The will is the mystery of personality which originates action and decides what we shall be occupied with. This ability of personality to originate and be responsible for all actions is the foundation of moral responsibility and accountability.

Free will and intelligence could function on the basis of what is right and proper, but would lack the delicacy and sensitivity of contemplation if there was no capacity of emotional response. All might be mechanically right, but would be monotonous if there were no reactions of evaluation, no ability to appreciate the desirable and avoid the undesirable, no pleasure or pain, no happiness or disappointment, no joy or sorrow. It must be remembered that in the functioning of personality, emotional response is not under the direct control of the will but is an automatic reaction to what the mind is being directed to consider, observe, or reason upon. But it is this ability to respond or react that forms the incentive to keep on thinking upon or continuing in a certain course of action. Without the ability of response we could not have the joy of appreciating moral worth. We could not venerate and worship the great Being of the Godhead.

It appears that conscience is not a separate entity of personality, but is a continuous operation of the mind in approving what we know to be right and condemning what we know to be wrong. When our minds approve what we are occupied with, this pleasurable satisfaction promotes a desire to keep on being so occupied. It brings about a deep restfulness that we are living according to true intelligence, or in a state of love. Love, then, is a directive of will in choosing to fulfill what is right and proper in our moral relations, but it is not a directive without warmth of conscience and emotional pleasure. In the darkest hours of our Saviour's life, just before the Cross, He prayed that His dear disciples *"may have My joy made full in themselves"* (Jn 17:13). It was *"the joy that was set before Him"* that gave our Saviour the inner satisfaction to endure the *"hostility by sinners"* and finally *"endured the cross, despising the shame"* (He 12:2-3). In His mind He envisioned the great multitude of repentant sinners in happy reconciliation to God because of His life and atonement. Such joy comes because of the ability of personality to have satisfaction and pleasure when we know we are giving ourselves for that which is right and for

the greatest good. The Lord Jesus could give His joy only to those who would join Him in devoting their lives to the most worth-while objectives, to anyone who will *“deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”* (Lk 9:23).

To our happy discovery, the Bible describes the Godhead, not as some immense impersonal force in haphazard activity, but rather as living Personalities, having the abilities of evaluation and invention, of sensitive reactions in contemplation, and of creative origination of activity. The Godhead are not under a fate of activity, a victim of Their own impulses, but have the mysterious ability of voluntary moral choice, or self-direction. They have chosen to use Their immeasurable energies in a constructive or benevolent manner, the results being called *the wisdom of God*.

It should overwhelm us with joy to learn that the Bible does not represent God as a great "First Cause" who entered into creation without emotional sensitivity and delight. The God of the Bible is not some sort of accidental force on the loose in the universe originating things at random (as evolutionary theories seem to imply), nor a concentrated immeasurable force programmed for some kind of activity (to use computer language). In fact, there would be no Bible if these tragic concepts were true. We would all be at the mercy of gigantic impersonal forces.

The Bible is an account of God's love and sensitivity toward man in providing for and seeking man's reconciliation. Could anything be more moving than the tender account as to how *“the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground”*, and then animated His creation by breathing *“into his nostrils the breath of life”*, so that *“man became a living soul”* in the Divine image? (Ge 2:7). Man being a tiny replica of his great spiritual Creator could only find happiness in relating himself to the Source of his life. We have considered the in-depth declaration of the Lord Jesus: *“He that has seen me has seen the Father”*. In other words, multiply our Lord's earthly *exhibition* of the Godhead as *“the Son of Man”* by the infinity of greatness and we are challenged to view with profound humility and worship an ever-enlarging concept of the Personalities of the Godhead.

**1. The Godhead possess intellectual activity or personal intelligence:**

1 Sam 2:35    Is 1:18                    Is 41:21    Is 55:8-9    Jer 29:11    Ex 32:7-14  
Ex 32:30-33    2 Kgs 19:14-28    Jer 2:1-13    Micah 6:1-3

**2. Experience emotional reactions of happiness or disappointment in accordance with man's attitudes:**

Ge 6:5-6            2 Chr 16:91    Ps 78:38    Ps 78:58-61    Ps 95:10-11    Is 12:1  
Eze 6:9-10    Micah 7:18-19    Zeph 3:17    Zech 1:14-16    Mt 18:23    Mt 18:27  
Mt 18:34-35    Mt 23:17            Lk 15:7    Lk 15:10            Jn 4:23    Re 3:20

**3. Possess the power of self-determination or free will:**

Ge 1:26            Ge 3:22-24    Ge 6:6    Ge 6:12-13    Ge 9:11-12    Ex 32:7-14  
Ex 32:30-33    2 Kgs 20:5-6    Is 12:1    Jn 5:21    Jn 10:18    Acts 1:7  
1 Co 12:11    Jas 1:18            1 Jn 4:14

## Natural Attributes

The Godhead are revealed in the Bible as possessing profound natural attributes of unspeakable greatness.

An attribute is a description of some quality of being or character, or of something that is true about a person or thing. A personality is not a bundle of attributes, so to speak, but possesses such an existence concerning which it may be said that certain qualities or characteristics are always there. The following attributes are natural, involuntary, or inherently belong to the essential Being of the Godhead.

### Eternity of Being

Ps 90:2   Ge 21:33   Dt 33:27   Ps 9:7   Ps 41:13   Ps 93:2   Ps 103:17   Is 26:4  
 Is 40:28   Is 44:6   Is 48:12   Ro 1:20   Ro 16:26   He 9:14   Re 4:8

From our natural observations we conclude that we ourselves had a beginning, and as far as this earthly life is concerned have a termination.

There must be a cause that is not subject to our temporary limitations. We were caused or brought into existence by our parents, they by theirs, and so back through the ages. A point is reached in the long chain of cause and effect where a First Cause is arrived at. This First Cause must have self-sustaining or uncaused life, so the idea of eternal existence springs up in our minds. God being uncaused must therefore be independent of our limitations. The Bible overwhelmingly establishes the idea that time or duration is an element in God's existence, and equally asserts that the Being of God is without beginning or ending. God, therefore, inhabits eternity, and beyond this we cannot go in our thinking.

The idea of eternity also springs up within our minds from the observed constancy of many things and operations about us. If astronomers would be disturbed if a variation of one second in a century should crop up, the Being back of all this cannot be subject to the laws of temporary existence.

### Omnipresence

Omnipresence is a natural attribute of the Godhead by which it is intended that the Being of God pervades all space and is everywhere manifested at all times:

Jer 23:2   Ps 139:1-10   Prov 15:3   1 Kgs 8:22-24   1 Kgs 8:27   Is 57:15   Mt 18:20  
 Mt 28:20   Acts 17:24   Acts 17:27-28   Ep 4:6   He 4:13

Just as it is our very nature to be localized in one place, so it is God's very nature to be everywhere present at the same time. While God occupies all space, He is not identified with the objects of space, God is everywhere present in spiritual essence. This is beyond our understanding and places the nature of God's Being in the realm of mystery. The mystery is

not surprising since we cannot comprehend the vital relation of our own spiritual essence with our physical body. We know from our own experience and observation that we are more than the mere physical, yet to define ourselves we cannot.

While the Godhead are everywhere present in the universe, Their essence is particularly concentrated or manifested in a distinct place in the universe called "heaven" where the "throne" or rule of God is in operation:

1 Kgs 8:27 Ps 11:4 Ps 103:19 Mt 6:9 Jn 14:2-3 Acts 7:55-56 2 Co 12:2-4  
Re 3:21 Re 4:2 Re 5:11-13 Re 20:11 Re 21:2 Re 22-23

We act upon and assume evidences for the existence of things on every hand that we do not understand. Who understands how our rooms can be filled with television waves and with radio waves from all over the world, without our being in the least impaired thereby? Who understands why light and sound waves travel as they do? What proof do you have that there is a wind? Various theories exist, but who understands? Thus in our daily lives, we act upon what we have evidence for, and so it must be concerning God. If we understood all about the nature of God, God would not be God.

**The existence of God is not established by direct understanding, therefore, but:**

- **By natural evidences**
- **By observations of present Divine activity and response and**
- **By spiritual consciousness**

We conclude from life's experiences and observations:

- That every harmonious arrangement of existence must have an adequate First Cause
- That there is great uniformity in sustaining and regulating greatly diverse existence, and strong reactions towards moral beings in accordance with their voluntary attitudes and actions; and
- That by virtue of our creation in the moral image of God we find ourselves asserting our own spiritual consciousness as having a separate existence and able to dominate our physical constitution, and thus we can visualize the spiritual essence of God creating and dominating the physical creation.

The idea of the spiritual only needs to be proved when we deny our native consciousness. Tribes of peoples throughout the world have devised modes of religious worship seeking to gain the favour and appease the Deity they have concluded must exist, exhibiting great guilt of conscience and fear. **Man can only fear what he visualizes as existing. His exertions of fear will be in proportion to the vividness of his persuasions.**

**To the true Christian, the great final evidence for the existence of God is the vital consciousness of his conversion experience (Jn 3:3), and the many evidences of**

**God's presence along the way of life (Jn 14:21, 23).** The New Testament is filled with descriptions of vital spiritual experiences that are to take place in our consciousness (see Section X on Transformation). Spiritual experiences with God become the strongest evidence of all, since they are direct (Ro 8:16) and do not have to be interpreted by the mind as do all human experiences. It was the vitality of Christian experience that empowered the early church with such energy of persuasion that opponents said: *"These men who have upset the world have come here also"* (Acts 17:6). In the early terrible persecutions, it was the overwhelming fullness of Divine persuasion that enabled the Christians to view the lions as their friends who would soon usher them into the very presence of their Lord. The multitudes of antagonists who came to see Christians devoured soon found that their unbelief was being devoured instead, as their dying songs of love and victory haunted them. God must be a reality if human beings can experience such overwhelming persuasion. Great final efforts to stamp out Christianity around 300 A.D. failed, so the Roman rulers had to make peace with this great, spiritual army or be conquered. But sadly enough, the conquest of Christianity into acceptability became the Beginning of deterioration - **what persecution could not do, popularity did.**

## Omniscience

**Omniscience, or a knowledge of all that is knowable,** is a natural attribute of the Godhead.

*"His understanding is infinite (or beyond measure)"*, said the Psalmist (Ps 147:5) *"There is no searching of his understanding"*, wrote Isaiah (Is 40:28). Job was told of the God who is *"perfect in knowledge"* by his advices (Job 37:16). The Apostle Paul extolled the greatness of God: *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"* (Ro 11:33). John wrote of the extensiveness of God's knowledge *"God knows all things"* (1 Jn 3:20). There are no objects of knowledge withheld from God, *"but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"* (He 4:13).

There is considerable evidence from the Scriptures that future choices of moral beings, when acting freely in their moral agency, have not been brought into existence as yet and thus are not fixities or objects of possible knowledge. This applies to actions of the Godhead as well as to the Self-caused actions of man. To say that the smallest details of Divine action down through the countless ages of eternity have always been in the Divine mind, is to say that God never experiences climaxes of decisions as a result of contemplation, or that God never originates anything new. This is fate applied to the Infinite. Choice is impossible without the origination of something new.

But God is represented in the Bible as making new decisions, as pondering situations and as making up His mind in conformity thereto, and as changing His mind when certain reactions took place. The Scriptures do not even hint that these descriptions of Divine actions are mere adaptations to our way of thinking, but simply and beautifully put them forth as revelations of the great God. These profound portrayals of the great unknown should excite all of us as they seek to lift the veil of our limited vision.

The extent of God's knowledge can only be learned from a painstaking reading of the Bible. The Berean Christians thus examined the teachings of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:11). "Theology

has much to unlearn before it will be either reasonable or Biblical”, said one. Some of the main passages of Scripture will be cited as we seek to summarise the extent of the Divine knowledge of present and future events.

1. God has absolutely perfect knowledge of all that is taking place at the present time in the entire universe, extending to men’s thoughts as well as actions, the disposition of every particle of matter, the action of every force, and the like:

1 Kgs 8:39    Prov 15:3    Jer 32:19    Eze 11:5    Mt 12:36-37    Jn 2:24    Acts 1:24  
He 4:13

Each Member of the Godhead is pictured as continually active in searching, investigating, or examining men’s innermost beings. Ro 8:27, Re 2:23, 1 Co 2:10 (“*all things*”).

2. Many future choices, actions, and mass reactions of men appear to be known to God beforehand and form the basis for many detailed plans of events that God purposes to bring to pass in making reconciliation possible for all men and in His government of world affairs. For example:

(a) Scriptures:

Ge 3:15            Is 53:2-3, 12            Zech 12:10    Mk 8:31    Mk 9:12, 31  
Mt 20:17-19    Mt 21:33-39, 45    He 7:24

The atoning death and rejection of Christ could be prophesied in Old Testament writings and by our Lord, because of God’s purpose to bring the Saviour into the world to die for all men’s sins and because of God’s profound knowledge as to how the immaculate holiness of Christ would result in violent rejection by the religious leaders (Jn 7:7). Satan would finally be utterly conquered (Lk 10:17-18, Ro 16:20, Re 20:1-3, 10) but only after having “*bruised*” the Saviour because the religious leaders and the great mass of the people had allowed Satan to have full sway in their lives. (Mt 4:9, Jn 8:44, Mt 27:20).

- (b) Dt 31:16-21 - God revealed to Moses that after his death Israel would rebel and require judgments to bring them back to repentance and forgiveness. Many times God had experienced Israel as “*a stiff-necked people*” (Dt 9:13) and observed “*their imagination*” or inner attitude then, even before the blessings of the promised land (Dt 31:21). Moses affirmed that they were rebellious while he was still with them, “*and how much more after my death*” (Dt 31:27).
- (c) Jer 1:5, 7 - Jeremiah, the prophet (626-580 B.C.) was a subject of knowledge before conception, evidently because of God’s special plan and purpose to raise up a prophet to give final warning to Judah of the approaching Babylonian captivity because of their sins. He experienced very special Divine influence and endowment from early life that appears to be almost compelling and went forth with great devotion and sincerity.
- (d) Mt 24:14, 2 Th 2:3-4, 1 Tim 4:1-3, 2 Tim 3:13 - Because of God’s knowledge of man’s extreme unwillingness to receive the truth and repent of sin, God knows that

the world will never be converted to Christ but become more and more determined in pursuit of selfish gratification. The Lord Jesus was asked, "*Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?*" (Lk 13:23) and had to agree with great heaviness of heart. Comparatively few would enter "*the strait gate*" and walk the "*narrow*" way to life (Mt 7:13-14). Thus God has had to make His plans accordingly and is presently taking out "*a people for his name*" from all nations (Acts 15:13-14).

- (e) 2 Tim 1:9-10 - The passage refers to the "*purpose and grace*" of God to make possible the forgiveness of sins through the sacrificial death of Christ (Tit 1:2), which was determined upon "*before age times*" or "*long ages ago*".
- (f) 1 Pe 1:20 - The verse may be rendered: "*Having come to be perceived before hand, indeed before (the) foundation of (the) world*". The concept of the Plan of atonement through the sufferings of Christ was worked out as a possibility before the foundation of the world and the creation of man, and resolved upon as a certainty "*from (the) foundation of (the) world*" (Re 13:8). "*The Lamb came to be slain*" in the mind of God as a certainty to be brought to pass in the duration of time the moment man sinned and made redemption necessary.
- (g) Acts 15:18 - The most authoritative Greek texts have only three words in this verse, rendered "*known from (the) age*", or "*known from of old*" (ASV, 1901, also ASB). James has summarised God's general programme to be that of gathering out from the world all who will respond to the Gospel, and then fulfill Old Testament prophecies by the return of Christ and the establishment, of His kingdom (Acts 15:13-17). He then affirmed that it is God "*who is doing these things, known from of old*", or that God's plan was not anything new but was made a long time ago.

3. Many events and future plans that God has decided upon and prophesied as certain to come to pass appear to be associated with the idea of causation. Scripture reveals that God can control the human will in the absolute sense setting aside in such acts its normal moral freedom and accountability, and placing it temporarily under a law of cause and effect (as Dt 2:25, Jer 50:9, Re 17:17).

In matters of personal salvation, however, God never coerces the will, but always maintains a delicate balance of moral freedom (as Dt 30:19, 15-20, Is 1:18-20, Jn 5:40, Ro 2:5-11, Re 3:20).

- (a) Ge 15:13-15 - Abraham's descendants would spend about 400 years in Egypt, actually becoming 430 years (Ex 12:40-41).
- (b) Ex 3:19-20 - "*The king of Egypt will not let you go*". God purposed to judge Egypt for their sins and cruel persecution of the Israelites, and would harden Pharaoh's heart or allow him to remain unpersuaded in his stubbornness to be the occasion for these righteous judgments (Ex 11:9-10).

God finally destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea by hardening the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites with great violence and determination (Ex 14:4, 5, 8, 17). God's causation extended from their minds into the physical realm, "*He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty*" (Ex 14:23-25).

- (c) Is 44:28-45:4 - Cyrus, king of Persia, was prophesied about 150 years before his great mission of making provision for the returning Jewish remnant from the 70 year captivity which God had determined upon. God could cause him to be so named, brought into power at the desired period and move him to make his proclamation (2 Chr 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4).
- (d) Jer 25:11-12, 29:10-14 - The 70 year Babylonian captivity was determined upon by God as judgment upon Judah for their rebellion against God's rulership. They were earnestly warned of this coming catastrophe which God planned to bring upon them, particularly by Jeremiah, who as a last measure was instructed to write in a book and publish these warnings. *"It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them"* (Jer 36:1-7). The warning was rejected (Jer 37:2).
- (e) Is 52:13, 53:12, Zech 12:10, Mt 20:17-19, Jn 12:32-34 - The only means of reconciling man to God was through an atoning sacrifice of a holy and worthy substitute. This death had to be from spiritual suffering because of identification with the sins of the world (Jn 1:29, 6:15, 10:17-18, 1 Pe 2:24). **God is faced with the certainty that His immaculate Son will not be tolerated on earth because of His exposure of sin and hypocrisy (Jn 7:7). He will be speedily put to death by stoning, the Jewish method of capital punishment. This would instantly terminate consciousness and thus frustrate the Atonement.**

The Roman method of capital punishment was crucifixion, which often prolonged conscious physical agony for many days. God resolved to exert a causative mental preference in the minds of the Jewish rulers and the rebellious mob to demand crucifixion rather than stoning (Mt 27:20-23). This would not lessen their moral responsibility and would provide that duration of the Saviour's consciousness on the cross which would allow His Holy Being to exhaust its endurance in intense spiritual suffering over man's awful guilt in rebelling against a Holy and Loving God.

Accordingly, descriptions representing the dreadfulness of such double agony (spiritually and physically) were given by inspiration in Old Testament times, particularly to Isaiah and the Psalmist David (Psalm 22). They were brought into many trying experiences to prepare them to write such solemn things. Our Lord with deepest realization foretold His crucifixion and agonized in the Garden to be delivered from that threatened violent death that would make impossible the atonement for which He came (He 5:7). His precious side would be pierced to prove to the whole world that He died from a broken heart because of men's sins and not from the crucifixion, as was prophesied (Jn 19:32-37).

- (f) Is 9:6-7, Jer 23:5-6; Dan, 2:44, 7:13-14, Mt 24-25, Acts 1:11, 1 Th 4:16-17, Re 1:1, 7, 4-22.

God's knowledge of man's extreme unwillingness to respond to His overtures of reconciliation has led Him to make many detailed plans as to the course of the ages. God planned and prophesied the advent of the Saviour and the accomplishment of redemption, as we have seen. He also has planned the bodily return of the Lord Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom of righteousness, many details of which were prophesied in the Old Testament and much more by our Lord and the New



Testament writers. God will judge nations and individuals in absolute righteousness. Their destiny will be determined upon the basis of their reactions to God's measures of mercy. The many details foretold in Revelation chapters 4 to the end will take on new meaning when they are being fulfilled, and will show God's wisdom in revealing them. The sum total of all of God's purposes will be a grand and unending oblation to the Triune Godhead (Re 19:1-9).

God can prophesy these many things because He has determined to bring them to pass by His direct causation. He is the Lord God Almighty. The exact time of the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven to close the present church age of God's great mercy does not appear to be a fixity in the Divine mind. We are in a great parenthesis which does not seem to have been prophesied in Old Testament times. The prophets were given to see the two peaks of Christ's first and second coming, without visualizing the valley of time in between. There appears to have been a great extension of this parenthesis of time in the mercy of God, over what was expected in New Testament times, as we shall see.

**4. Many Bible passages, when taken in their natural meaning, appear to indicate that God does not have absolute foreknowledge over all His own future actions, nor over all those of His moral creatures.** Examples are:

- (a) Gen 6:3, 5-7- Here God is said to have repented or regretted that man had been created, when it became manifest how stupendous and persistent man's indulgence in sinful rebellion had become. The word *repent* and its derivatives is used to describe the actions of God some 33 times in the Old Testament, and can only indicate an aroused state of grief and disappointment, except in some instances where God changed His mind because of happy reactions. See in Chapter 10, page 133 on repent.
- (b) Gen 22:12 - God experienced a climax of blessing when Abraham was about to carry through God's strange command to slay his son Isaac on an alter.
- (c) Ex 32:7-14 - God was determined to wipe out the whole nation Israel after the golden calf apostasy and start a new nation through Moses, but. changed His mind through the humble and reasoning intercession of Moses.
- (d) Ex 33:5 - God was waiting to see how the nation of Israel reacted in humility after the golden calf crisis before determining His judgment upon them.
- (e) Nu 11:1-2 - Israel's complaining amidst blessings suddenly brought forth God's judgment, which was stayed by their humility and the prayer of Moses.
- (f) Dt 8:2 - God expected to discover from the 40 year wandering in the wilderness Israel's true heart and reactions to His loving provisions.
- (g) Judges 2:20-22 - God had changed His mind about driving out some of the nations of Palestine because of Israel's sin. Compare 3:1-5 with Ex, 33:2, 34:24, God expected to find out from these nations whether Israel would be faithful and true or not.
- (h) 1 Sam 15:10-11, 23, 35 - God very reluctantly gave Saul to be king over His chosen people Israel, in response to their demands (8:6-7). Although Saul had an impressive

background and was “*a choice young man*” (9:1-2), and was anointed with the Holy Spirit and was given “*another heart*” (10:6, 9-11), he disobeyed God’s directions. God was thereby grieved and rejected him as king in favour of David. The natural interpretation is that if God had foreseen Saul’s rebellion He would not have chosen him to be king. Samuel’s grief must have reflected God’s (15:11).

- (i) 2 Kgs 20:1-7 - God changed His mind and decided to add 15 years to King Hezekiah’s reign over Judah because of his humble prayers.
- (j) 1 Chr 21:11-15 - Of the three means of punishment offered to him, David elected to fall under the direct judging hand of God for he felt that God was more merciful than men. God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem, but in the process God was moved with mercies and changed His mind, staying the angel’s hand from further judgment.
- (k) 2 Chr 12:5-8 - When King Rehoboam of Judah and the leaders humbled themselves when threatened with judgment, God changed His mind and granted them “some deliverance,” or modified the severity of His planned judgment.
- (l) Jer 18:5-10 - God here declares that He will change His purposes of judgment and blessing in accordance with man’s reactions toward His commands.
- (m) Jer 26:2-7, 12-13 - Jeremiah received a special commission to plead with and warn Judah of the coming Babylonian captivity of 70 years, which God had determined to bring to pass against them for their rebellion against His loving plans (Jer 25:8-11). Jeremiah proclaimed in the temple the possibility of God changing His purpose of judgment if they would respond in repentance, all to no avail, he was brought to justice and threatened with death.
- (n) Joel 2:12-14 - Joel during a previous period of judgment set forth the fact that God might be induced to repent of His pronounced judgments by sincere repentance on man’s part, if in deep humility and exposure of heart.
- (o) Jonah 3:2, 4,10, 4:2 - God sent Jonah to pronounce Nineveh’s destruction in 40 days, but changed His mind and spared the city when one of the greatest recorded repentance took place. This is exactly what Jonah feared might happen because of God’s great mercy.
- (p) Mt 10:2-4, Lk 6:12-13, Mk 3:14-15 - Judas was chosen to be one of the twelve apostles to serve God and be a witness to the Gospel and revealed truth, which he obviously was partaking of, but rebelled and became an apostate, thus frustrating the loving plans of his Master (Acts 1:25). If the Lord Jesus chose to bestow extended labour of preparation upon one whom He certainly foresaw would fail of the intended mission, it would appear that an unwise and inconsistent choice was made.
  - i. The Lord Jesus chose the Twelve from His disciples after an all night of prayer to the Father: Lk 6:12-13.
  - ii. The threefold purpose in calling the Twelve is plainly declared: Mk 3:14-15.
  - iii. Judas was in a state of salvation when chosen and sent forth to represent Christ:

Lk 9:1-2    Mt 10:8    Mt 12:25-26    Mt 10:16, 20    Jn 8:44  
 Mk 6:7, 12    Lk 9:6    Jn 13:20

- iv. Judas rebelled against his Master (Jn 6:64, 70-71), joined himself to Satan (Lk 22:3, Jn 13:2), and thus fell from his “*ministry and apostleship*” (Acts 1:17, 25).
- v. It does not appear that the treachery of Judas was specifically prophesied in the Old Testament, nor that the Lord Jesus expected his apostasy until He perceived its development in his mind. If our Lord expected it all the time, why was He heart-stricken at its development? (Jn 13:21). It is obviously presented as a tragic surprise.

The following are the passages involved and suggested literal renderings:

- Jn 6:64 - *“But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him”. “From the beginning”* most likely refers to their unbelief or turning of heart, which Jesus was observing (Jn 2:24-25). See Mt 19:4, 8, Acts 11:15, 26:4, Phil 4:15.
- Jn 6:70 - *“Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?”*. This strongly implies that he was not such originally, but became so (Lk 22:3, Jn 13:2).
- Jn 6:71 - *“For he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him”*. Nothing is prophetic here, merely stating his purposes.
- Jn 13:11 - *“For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, Not all of you are clean”*.
- Jn 13:18 - *“I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled”* (or again illustrated): *“HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME”*. Our Lord is referring back to a purely historical event in the life of David, where his counsellor Ahithophel betrayed him and joined Absalom’s rebellion (Ps 41:9 see 2 Sam 15:12, 16:23), which was similar to His sad experience. In Jn 13:18 and 17:12 we have the conjunction *hina* with a verb *to fulfill*, which may be translated either *in order that might be fulfilled*, or *so that was fulfilled*, indicating a refulfilment of an Old Testament situation or declaration.
- Jn 17:12 - *“While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled”*. What Scripture our Lord had in mind is not known, perhaps Ps 41:9, as above.
- Acts 1:16-17, 20 - *“Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry... For it is written in the book of Psalms,*  
*LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT, and, LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE”*

Reference is back to Ps 69:25, where we notice a plural pronoun used, not a singular pronoun which would be the case if this was a specific prophecy to Judas. The other reference is to Ps 109:8, where the words, “*let another man take his office*” are a part of a context extending from verse 6 to verse 19. This whole passage is a pronouncement against “*adversaries from the Lord*” (verse 20). Since only one small part of this passage is referred to, it would appear that the brief quotation in Acts 1:20 is intended as an application of a previously pronounced judgement upon a typical enemy of God.

- vi. Mk 13:32, Mt 24:36 - The day of Christ's return is not now firmly fixed as a matter of knowledge. Neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit knows. It will occur when the Father in His authority decides that it should (Acts 1:7), which is His supreme prerogative (Jn 14:28, 1 Co 11:3, Re 1:1).
- vii. Mt 16:27-28, 24:34, Ro 13:11-12, Phil 4:5, Jas 5:8-9, 1 Pe 4:7, 1 Jn 2:18, Re 1:1, 3, 3:11, 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20. The coming of Christ and the fulfilment of end time prophecies of judgment and the establishment of the millennial kingdom was expected to take place during apostolic or New Testament times, but has been delayed these many centuries by the longsuffering and mercy of God. How could New Testament revelation uniformly portray the soon coming of Christ if it were fixed in the Divine mind that some 1900 years would elapse?
- viii. Re 3:5, 22:18-19 - Names can be blotted out of the Book of Life, plagues can be added, and souls shut out from the tree of life upon certain conditions of persistent rebellion against God. If the entire course and destiny of everyone were known to God, those who do not continue faithful unto the end would never be written in the Book of Life or have an expected part in the tree of life.

## Omnipotence

**Omnipotence, or possession of power or energy of personality without limitation, is a natural attribute of the Godhead.**

Ge 17:1	Ex 6:1-3, 6-7	Job 33:4	Ps 91:1	Jer 32:17-19	Eze 10:4-5
2 Co 6:16-18	Re 1:8	Re 4:8	Re 11:15-17	Re 15:2-4	Re 19:5-9
Re 14-16	Re 21:22				

See also: Joel 1:14-15 (*Almighty* used 47 times in the Old Testament)

Thus the Bible inspires the concept that God is all-powerful, or possesses power or energy of personality without limitation as far as force is concerned. Nothing shall fail to be done for want of Divine energy. This, however, does not mean that there are no limitations imposed upon Divine omnipotence. God has power over His powers.

1. Natural impossibilities are limitations in the operations of Divine omnipotence. For example, God “*cannot deny himself*” (2 Tim 2:13), cannot modify His natural attributes (He 11:6), cannot make a thing to be and not to be at the same time; cannot abolish the laws of mathematics, two and two can never equal five in any realm.

2. God's nature and moral character imposes limitations. God is able to do whatever He wills (except with moral beings), but His will is limited to doing those things which are in harmony with His wise and holy and perfect character. God cannot do things contrary to Himself. This is not a defect in Divine omnipotence but a perfection of the Divine Being.
3. God's will limits His abounding energy, in that God simply has not chosen to bring to pass everything that is possible. God has not exhausted Himself in what He has purposed to bring into existence.
4. Man as an endowed moral being has been given the ability to limit the omnipotence of God. Mankind by their rebellion against God and their obstinacy in refusing the mercy of forgiveness through the atoning death of Christ have imposed very great limitations upon God's will and happiness. God in creating moral creatures with the power of contrary choice made this a possibility. Evidently the achievement of a moral world of beings who would voluntarily choose to live intelligently was deemed of greater value than an unlimited display of omnipotence.

## Moral Attributes

Another class of attributes, designated as moral attributes, are said to characterize the Members of the Godhead.

**Moral attributes involve the element of choice, or have a voluntary causation to them.** They are not natural attributes in that they are not endowments of God's existence, but are moral in the sense that they are the result of a disposition of will. They exist because each Member of the Godhead perpetually chooses that they should be so. Moral character must be an active something. It cannot be a static fixity of some sort back of the will, causing its actions. Moral character is dynamic. It is the whole personality in action. It is what we are doing with our endowments or abilities of personality.

Before summing up what the Bible has to say about God's moral character, we must remind ourselves as to what are the essentials of moral action and what kind of action determines moral character.

**Since man has been created in the moral image of God (Ge 1:26-27), what principles are true of God will also be true of man.**

If there is to be moral action and moral character, **First**, there must be the endowments of personality. We have abundantly seen that the Divine Being is not an impersonal force but a Triune Personality. God possesses personal intelligence, or the faculty of reason and perception with its ability of self evaluation or consciences. God also possesses that endowment of being that can have a response, or emotional experiences which develop the sense of the valuable. Finally, God possesses ability of free will or the power to originate action. Free will is the ability of self-direction or self-decision, that something can put intelligence to work in arriving at a decision for action, that propulsion of will or energy to get things done, that faculty of self-determination or self-causation that has only one's self to blame for one's own actions.

**Secondly**, for such a personal being to have moral action, the intelligence must be in possession of intellectual comprehension of truth and understanding to give direction to what choices ought to be made. There must be moral light as to what is right conduct and what is wrong conduct, all things considered. We read in 1 Jn 1:5 that *“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”*. Our Lord Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world”* (Jn 8:12). God is, then, the very essence of moral light and is able to guide His own actions to absolute perfection. The Psalmist said, in addressing God: *“O Lord God of truth”* (Ps 31:5). The Holy Spirit is called *“the Spirit of truth”* (Jn 14:17). In the mind of God, therefore, is the absolute standard of what moral actions are right and proper, viewing all moral beings in absolute perspective of their relationships and character. This perfect moral light is possessed by each of the Personalities of the blessed Trinity.

**Thirdly**, we need to understand the true nature of moral action and moral character. Not all actions of a moral being are of the same importance. Some actions result from other actions or dispositions. A moral action must be an act of will, not something back of the will causing it to act as it does.

A moral action is to act in accordance with the moral light of truth residing in the intelligence, or to act contrary to it. Such moral actions of will must be positive and definite and cannot be partial, in the sense that a moral being may partly will to take a certain action and partly refuse at the same time. A decision of will may change from moment to moment, but when acting in a certain direction it is always definite and positive, and cannot be partial.

As we break down the many actions of a moral being, we discover that there are ultimate or supreme choices, which determine the overall destination of life, and subordinate choices that are made to further the prevailing ultimate choice. All who analyse moral character seek to press a person's actions back to the ultimate motive or reason for doing things, and recognize that any action that can be traced further back as to why it was done does not in itself determine moral character. We must, therefore, press the chain of decisions of will back to the point where, we encounter a state of will that has no reason for its existence, except that the personality involved has so chosen of his own independent volition. In other words, the underlying motivating force of life is the supreme reason why anything is done, and thus determines one's moral character.

Having considered these essentials of personality and moral character, we are now prepared to enumerate and classify the moral attributes of the Godhead. An attribute is a quality or characteristic, and a moral attribute is such a trait of character that is true in the realm of voluntary activity. We shall observe that some of the moral attributes are dependent upon others. In fact, all of the moral attributes of the Godhead are reducible to two:

- A supreme choice by each Member of the Godhead to be motivated by love or perfect benevolence in all that is done, and
- The absolute faithfulness or unchangeable persistency in perpetually maintaining this disposition of love.

Let us allow our hearts to rise in profound worship and adoration as we consider what appears to be the greatest revelation of the Divine Being bestowed to man.

Many dark questions of providence and judgment are viewed in a very different light under this simplification of Divine actions and reactions.

## Love

**The essential or basic moral attribute of the Godhead is embodied in the words, "God is Love"** (1 Jn 4:8, 16). *Love* as so used is not primarily an emotional state, but is an attitude of will to bestow kindnesses upon others according to perfect intelligence of what is right and proper.

The word *good* is frequently used to describe the essential goodness of God:

2 Chr 30:18-19 Ps 25:8 Ps 34:8 Ps 86:5 Ps 100:5 Ps 106:1  
 Ps 119:68 Ps 145:9 Jer 33:11 Nah 1:7 Mt 5:44-48 Mt 19:16-17  
 Mt 20:12-15

Also the word "*goodness*":

Ex 33:19 Ex 34:6-7 Ps 27:13 Ps 31:19 Ps 33:5 Jer 31:12 Zech 9:17 Ro 2:4

There are only two directions that a moral being can take in a supreme rule of life. A personality can choose to be intelligent or unintelligent, to fulfill all obligations toward all moral beings or not to do so, to be impartial or partial. An admixture is impossible. The one is a state of virtuous love, the other a state of selfishness. God possesses a perfect comprehension of what is right and proper in every circumstance. Each Member of the Godhead perpetually chooses to be motivated by love or perfect benevolence in all that is done, fulfilling all obligations with absolute impartiality by treating every moral being with perfect intelligence.

The love of God the Father is the source of all true love in the world:

Jn 3:16-17 Ro 5:5 Ro 8:38-39 2 Co 13:11 1 Jn 2:15 1 Jn 4:7-8, 16

The love of Christ is referred to in: Jn 15:9, Ro 8:35, 2 Co 5:14, Ep 3:19, 2 Tim 1:13.

The Holy Spirit is known by His operations of love, as in Ro 5:5, 15:30, Ga 5:22.

This loving disposition of God was the mainspring of redemption:

Ro 5:8 Ep 2:4 1 Jn 4:9-12 Jn 15:13 Ga 2:20 Ep 5:2 Re 1:5

God's evaluation of the importance of the love is set forth in 1 Co 13. The nature of Love as a voluntary disposition, to be entered upon and maintained, is illustrated in God's commands to men:

Jn 5:42 Jn 15:9-10 1 Co 16:13-14 Ep 5:1-2 1 Tim 1:5 1 Jn 2:5  
 1 Jn 4:16 1 Jn 5:3 Jude 21

This portrayal of the moral character of the Godhead is the most profound revelation of the Bible.

## Holiness

**Holiness** is a moral attribute of the Godhead, or more properly is an attribute of love: Le 11:44, Is 6:3, 1 Pe 1:15-16, Re 4:8. The primary idea of the Hebrew word rendered *holy* is that of cutting off or separation, and thus properly means worthy of veneration or reverend. The New Testament Greek equivalent has a similar significance.

Because *"God is love"* (1 Jn 4:8, 16), or is living in a state of goodwill or true benevolence, and because *"God is light"* (1 Jn 1:5), or is the embodiment, of perfectly intelligent conduct, God is holy or is worthy of the veneration and worship of all. Holiness in God is a dynamic state of being, rather than a static or fixed something somewhere in the Divine nature. It is descriptive of the character of God which is established by right moral action. *"God is light"* because *"He is in the light"* (1 Jn 1:7). God's conduct is in accordance with the scrutiny of absolute intelligence. The Lord Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world"* (Jn 8:12), by which He meant that His manner of living was its standard, He could say, *"Which one of you convicts Me of sin?"* (Jn 8:46), and thus was *"separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens"* (He 7:26). He affirmed that this walk in the light is true life.

Holiness, therefore, is a descriptive term applied to moral beings who are voluntarily fulfilling their moral obligation, or are conforming to their moral light or perception of truth. Holiness is an evaluation that is due to virtuous moral beings. It is a tribute of praise and veneration because a moral being has chosen to be virtuous when such a one might have chosen otherwise. Holiness does not do anything, therefore, and consequently not properly a moral attribute, but attaches an atmosphere of sanctity to the whole character and actions of the Godhead because They have chosen to be guided by intelligence in all Their actions without the least taint of arbitrariness, partiality, or self-assertiveness. The perception of the Godhead of Their moral obligation is absolutely perfect and complete. God's voluntary conformity is perfect and uninterrupted. Therefore God's holiness or moral worth is absolute (Re 4:8). *"YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY"* (Le 11:44, 1 Pe 1:16) is plainly a description of God's manner of living, with a strong admonition to man to follow in the ways of his Creator. **Holiness is not something one has, but something one is.**

## Righteousness

**Righteousness, is a moral attribute of God, or more properly is an attribute of Love:**

Ge 18:25   Dt 32:4   Job 36:1-2   Ps 11:7   Dan 9:7, 14   Hosea 14:9  
 Jn 17:25   Ro 14:17   He 1:8-9   Re 15:3

Righteousness is simply a disposition, to deal rightly with every moral character. Righteousness as a moral attribute of God is God's determination to test every moral being according to his conduct and to dispense justice between moral beings. *"Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"* declared Abraham (Ge 18:25). Just as holiness describes the voluntary disposition of love back of all actions, so righteousness described the many individual actions that issue forth from this disposition of love in the conduct of God's responsibilities toward His moral creatures. If God should show leniency and partiality toward some and be more strict with others, He



would have to do so for some selfish reason. But if there is any selfish reason for any of God's actions, God has ceased to be benevolent and impartial. Thus righteousness toward all moral beings is dictated by the perfect virtuous love of God.

1. The righteousness of God is manifested in Divine reactions against disobedience and pleasure in obedience of His moral creatures (Jas 4:6-7, He 6:10, with a registry of every guilty and virtuous action).
2. In establishing a court of final judgment to evaluate the guilt of each moral being in all fairness before all (He 9:27).
3. In the eternal separation of those who love Him and desire to live virtuously from those who have insisted on pressing in their own rebellion of heart, with due rewards and sufferings (Dan 12:2, Mt 25:46, 2 Th 1:6-10).
4. In the forgiveness of repentant sinners through faith in the substituted sufferings of the Lord Jesus (Ro 3:24-26, 1 Jn 1:9).

## Loving-Kindness and Mercy

**Loving-kindness and mercy is a moral attribute of God, or more properly is an attribute of Love.**

Is 54:8 Ps 86:5 Lam 3:22 Ro 2:4 Ep 2:4 Jas 5:11 2 Pe 3:9

The choice to live lovingly or in a state of voluntary good-willing does something to all our relations, for we read, "*Love is patient, . . . is kind*" (1 Co 13:4). This is the opposite of allowing the righteous feelings of vindictive justice towards those who have injured us to hold sway in our beings. **The loving disposition of the Godhead has completely overcome all feelings of vindictive justice, which man's rebellion and persistence in wickedness has caused to arise in the Divine Being.** Now, instead of this insistence on strict justice, mercy and forgiveness is offered upon certain necessary conditions which will make happy reconciliation possible.

Loving-kindness and mercy is a tendency to be lenient and kind toward the unworthy, which is the meaning *grace* so often applied to the Godhead (Tit 2:11). This is the quality of humiliation and self-abasement, a willingness to jeopardize proper standing and recognition out of compassion to the undeserving. "*God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son*".

It is a sacrificial impartation of life rather than a conservation of life. It sacrifices its own welfare and just due to grant to other moral beings its storehouse of blessings. "*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus*" wrote the Apostle Paul of the willingness of the Son to leave the profound serenity of heaven and enter the area of our humiliation so that He might give His life in a sacrificial death for the sins of the whole world (Phil 2:5).

Pardon and forgiveness cannot be brought to pass unless God's righteous obligations can be satisfied and unless man is willing to repent and embrace the conditions of mercy. It is here that the blessed atonement of Christ enters as the greatest fact of world history:

1. It upholds moral government, by showing forth the awful nature of sin and its just due of eternal punishment.
2. It reveals God's inner hatred of sin and how terrifying have been the effects of sin upon the Members of the Godhead.
3. It furnishes the crushing force to subdue the tremendous structure of human pride, humbling man for the pride where God can pour out His storehouse of blessings in tender kindness.
4. It provides the means for man's complete transformation and affectionate motivation in a newness of life.

The only thing left is for man to repent of all sin and stupidity and seek the face of God in proper humbleness, identifying himself in a committal of faith to the sufferings of Christ for his sins, as the only hope of his forgiveness and spiritual restoration from a state of ruin. God, then, can become joyful in loving forgiveness, consistent with His righteous obligations, "*because he delights in mercy*" (Micah 7:18-19).

## Wisdom

**Wisdom is a moral attribute of God, or more properly is an attribute of Love, since wisdom is the benevolent use of the abilities of personality.**

Ro 11:33 Ps 104:24 Ps 136:1-9 Prov 3:19 Jer 51:15 1 Co 2:7 (1-10)  
Ep 3:10 Col 2:3

Wisdom is intellectual ability and knowledge put to work by love to devise designs and plans that tend to good and usefulness. Wisdom, then, is the net product of the personal abilities of God, the knowledge of God, and the willingness to use these endowments in a benevolent or loving way. It is the net end product of the Being and character of God. It is what God's personality and knowledge can do when applied in a benevolent or loving way. It is an amalgamation of a loving purpose with an intellectual ability to design, an emotional ability to guide and evaluate, and an energy of personality to bring to pass.

Wisdom is more than moral character, since it is caused by or is the fruit of moral character. Wisdom is higher than knowledge, since it is the benevolent use of knowledge. Wisdom is knowledge tempered by and harnessed by goodness. Wisdom is more than the endowments of personality. It is the product of personality, lived in a right and useful way. Thus, wisdom is one of the most crowning moral attributes of the Godhead.

While the design and creation of the vast universe with all its furnishings is a product of God's wisdom, it appears that the greatest achievement of God's wisdom relates to the accomplishment of redemption and the spiritual blessings granted to those who responds. The blessed plan of salvation through the sufferings of a substituted Saviour was a crowning manifestation, and also its accomplishment in spite of man's rejection and violence against his own redeemer (1 Co 2:1-10).

Profound wisdom is also manifested in the plan of the mystical church of Christ, as amalgamated together in a living organism by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in this glorious age of grace (Ep 3:1-12). **Throughout the endless ages of eternity, the redeemed shall marvel at the unending manifestation of the wisdom of the Godhead.**

## Truthfulness

**Truthfulness is a moral attribute of God, or more properly is an attribute of Love:**

Ex 34:6 Ps 25:10 Is 65:16 Jn 14:6,17 Jn 17:3,17 1 Th 1:9 2 Tim 2:15

As long as God is Love, He must be truthful since there would be nothing to prompt untruthfulness. By untruthfulness a selfish heart attempts to gain something that is not due to it, and to cover up its true character. But God's perfect benevolence simply desires to manifest itself in its true character and has nothing to cover up or conceal. It would, therefore, be impossible for God to speak any kind of falsehood or in any way misrepresent Himself to man while love prevails. God has declared Himself in the Bible to be "*abundant in goodness and truth*" (Ex 34:6), and inspired the Psalmist to write, "*All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth*" (Ps 25:10). "*For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God*" wrote Peter in accounting for the existence of the Bible (2 Pe 1:21). God the Father is said to be "*the God of truth*"; the Lord Jesus could affirm, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*"; the Holy Spirit is "*the Spirit of truth*". Truthfulness in absolute perfection is a must, therefore, as long as impartial love prevails.

SUMMARY: To sum up those moral attributes of God which are in reality attributes of God's voluntary moral character of perfect love or impartial goodwill toward all moral beings, we may say: That perfect love must treat every moral being in absolute righteousness; will be tempered by loving-kindness and mercy toward all, when righteousness is not sacrificed thereby; will engage the faculties and endowments of personality to devise and produce manifestations of wisdom; and will be perfectly truthful in all revelations and expressions of factual knowledge. Holiness is the proper evaluation of this whole wonderful proceeding, but since all proceeds from love, holiness more specifically is a true evaluation of the voluntary disposition of love.

## Faithfulness

**Faithfulness or unchangeableness is a moral attribute of God:**

Dt 7:9 Ps 102:25-27 Lam 3:23 Mal 3:6 1 Co 10:13 2 Tim 2:13  
He 13:8 Jas 1:17 1 Pe 4:19 Re 1:5-6 Re 5:9-10

When it is said that God is faithful or unchangeable, it is intended that the Triune Personalities of the Godhead have always maintained and will always maintain a voluntary disposition of impartial good-will toward all moral beings. Or you may say that "*God is love*" in essential moral character, always has been in a state of love, and always will be in a state of love. Because of this absolute stability, we may have perfect confidence that God will always deal righteously,

will always be merciful when possible, will always exercise wisdom in all actions, and will always be perfectly truthful in all manifestations.

In moral character, therefore, the Triune Godhead are absolutely committed to a state of perfect love, without the slightest interruption. Thus Moses could write, *"the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God"* (Dt 7:9). The Psalmist could say *"But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end"* (Ps 102:25-27). Jeremiah could extol God in the words: *"Great is your faithfulness"* (Lam 3:23). Malachi could quote God as saying *"I am the Lord, I change not"* (Mal 3:6). Paul could confidently affirm *"God is faithful"*, and *"He remains faithful"* (1 Co 10:13, 2 Tim 2:13). In Hebrews it could be declared: *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever"* (He 13:8). James not only could say, *"with whom there is no variation"*, but also, *"or shifting shadow (or shadow cast by turning)"* (Jas 1:17). Peter admonished his fellow-Christians to *"entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right"* (1 Pe 4:19). This perfectly virtuous and uninterrupted conduct of the Godhead form the foundation of the heavenly chorus, where every superlative will be heralded as God's holy will is done in every iota (Re 1:5-6, 5:9-10).

# 4

# Happiness and Blessedness

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## Happiness and Blessedness that man was created to enjoy

- *“Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over. . . all the earth, God created man in His own image” (Ge 1:26-27).*
- *“He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ...for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, For we also are His children” (Acts 17:26, 28).*
- *“In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Ep 2:22).*
- *“For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE” (2 Co 6:16).*
- *“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Co 10:31).*
- *“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His” (2 Chr 16:9).*
- *“The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy” (Zeph 3:17).*
- *“But be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Ep 5:18-19).*

Happiness has been defined as a state of well-being and pleasurable satisfaction. Blessedness is a state of the most refined happiness, arising from the purest and warmest benevolent and religious feeling. It is the enjoyment of spiritual happiness. The Godhead in Their satisfaction of blessed fellowship (Jn 17:5) desires to create an order of beings who could evaluate and become a part of those joyous experiences. The blessed possibilities of happy fellowship in God-man and man-man relationships in pursuit of the mystery of life in a physical world and universe setting was the motivating purpose in creation.

## Man is Qualified

**Man is qualified by his endowments of personality to enter into happy fellowship with his Creator and with his fellow men.**

Man in his spiritual or real essence was created as a tiny replica of the great God, to possess infinite miniature the abilities and qualities of being that God possesses in His infinite realm. Certainly this is implied in the narrative in Ge 1:26-27 and 2:7. The words **image** and **likeness** are very similar in meaning. **Image** conveys the idea of a shadowing forth, from a root, to shade. It is thus a shadow, phantom, resemblance, or likeness. **Likeness** is defined as a similitude, image, or resemblance, from a root, to be like, to compare. The word is used of shapes cast in moulds (2 Chr 4:3) and of an appearance resembling something (Ezq 1:16). The similitude of man to God is also implied in admonitions of comparison, as in 1 Pe 1:16 (from Le 11:44) and Mt 5:48. The Lord Jesus in His essential humanity so resembled the Being of God that He could say: "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*" (Jn 14:9). Man like God, therefore, has been given functional capacities of personality that make possible, individuality and moral character, with the possibility of blessed fellowship.

### Ability of Intellect

Ability of intellect, or reasoning powers and understanding, imagination or a mental picture of what is not seen, self-consciousness and God-consciousness, conscience or self-evaluation, and memory or an indelible record in complete perspective of what has taken place. This ability is commonly referred to in Scripture as an ability of *spirit* and *mind*:

Job 20:3	Prov 20:27	Is 1:18	Is 26:3, 9	Is 55:8-9	Mk 12:28-31
Jn 4:23-24	Ro 7:23-25	Ro 12:1-2	1 Co 2:11-12, 16	Ep 2:3	Ep 4:23
Phil 4:8	Tit 1:15	He 8:10			

### Ability of Emotion or Experience

Ability of emotion or experience, as a reaction to what is thought or acted upon, the area of satisfaction and happiness, of pleasure and pain, of worship and adoration, commonly referred to as an ability of *soul*.

Ge 2:7	1 Co 15:45, 44	Nu 21:4	Job 10:1	Ps 42:1, 5-6	Ps 63:5-7
Ps 84:2	Is 61:10	Mt 11:28-30	Mt 22:36-37	Lk 1:46-47	Lk 12:19-21
1 Pe 1:22-23					

### Ability of Free Will

Ability of free will or self-determination, the ability to originate our own actions, the self-caused energy of personality, the essence of moral character, commonly referred to as the "*heart*" of man.

Ex 36:2    Dt 4:29    Dt 5:29    1 Sam 7:3    1 Kgs 8:38-40    Ps 10:4-6  
 Ps 57:7    Jer 17:9-10    Jer 29:12-13    Dan 1:8    Mk 7:21-23    Mk 11:22-24  
 Acts 7:39    Acts 11:23    Ro 6:17 (16-18)    Ro 10:9-10    2 Co 9:7    He 3:8 (7-9), 12

Man is not to be thought of as a divisible being, with distinct parts that can be segregated and examined independently. Man is rather to be thought of as an integrated whole personality, with the above endowments or abilities incorporated into his consciousness. Each of these abilities involves the whole personality in a unified action. Man is a psycho-physical personality having both spiritual and physical elements. Man is, therefore, a whole personality, created in the moral image of God, an integrated whole having:

- An intellectual function or mind, or a spiritual function enabling man to be God-conscious
- A soulish function qualifying for self-consciousness
- A heart function or the mysterious endowment of self-determination, and
- A bodily function or a physical activity.

## The Essence of Man's Life

**The real essence of man's life was intended to consist in the full expression of his personality in blessed fellowship with God and with his fellow men, with supreme satisfaction and happiness.**

Man has been placed in relationships that afford this opportunity for expressing his whole personality. This was God's plan. For this man was designed and created, "*for in Him we live and move and exist*" (Acts 17:28), "*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Co 10:31). "*You also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit*" (Ep 2:22). The word *dwelling* stresses the idea of a permanent place in contrast to a sojourner. The blessed fulfilment of these planned relationships can only be found in man's proper recognition of his relationships and fulfilment of their obligations. Man was never intended to find happiness in selfish independence but was to be a supplementary outlet for the great Being of God.

## Spiritually or Vertically

Man was created to have an absolutely intimate relationship with God, making possible perfect and continued fellowship:

Ge 1:26-27    Ge 17:1    Ex 33:11, 14    1 Chr 26:9    2 Chr 6:30    2 Chr 16:9  
 Is 57:15    Zeph 3:17    Mt 28:20    Ga 2:20    Col 1:27    Jn 2:24-25  
 Jn 4:23-24    Jn 14:23    Jn 17:3, 23    Acts 17:24-28    He 4:13    1 Jn 4:16  
 Re 3:20

Man's relationship to God was to be absolutely unique in that it was not to depend upon external manifestations, as every other relationship of man's does. **Our relationship to God was to be direct and real and continuous in a blessed state of communion and enjoyment of the Divine Personalities.**

## Socially or Horizontally

Human associations with means of manifestation and communication through the five senses **Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting and Touching**. Ge 2:18, 20 (man *alone* amidst the animals), Acts 17:26 ("*one blood*" or likeness), Ge 11:1, 4 (companionship is natural), 1 Sam 18:1, 3 (David and Jonathan), Mt 22:36-40 (the twofold relationship), Jn 17:21:23 ("*all may be one*"), Acts 2:41-47 (the early church), Ro 15:32 (*refreshed* by friendship), Ep 4:25 ("*members one of another*"), 2 Tim 1:3-5 (Paul and Timothy), 1 Pe 3:7 ("*heirs together of the grace of life*", a spiritually related marriage), 1 Jn 1:3-4, 7 ("*fellowship one with another*"). How happy are the possibilities of human friendship in the mutual presence of God.

## Physically or Materially

Physically or materially, the world and the universe, with its diverse life and activity, as a profound environment contributing to man's relationship and happiness with God and with his fellow men:

1. The world and the universe is a tangible manifestation of the character and greatness of God that greatly inspires admiration, confidence, gratitude and worship:

Ps 8:3-6   Ps 104:24   Ps 136:1-9   Prov 3:19   Jer 51:1

2. Man's surroundings were also intended to present a congenial and inspiring atmosphere for fellowship and happiness with one another, with endless fascinating discoveries, as well as being designed exactly to meet every physical need. Happy occupation would provide a constructive medium of communication. Toil, antagonisms of nature, pain, sickness and death were to be unknown in buoyant invigorating activity (Ge 2:8-17).

## Intelligent Recognition and Devoted Fulfilment

**The unalterable condition of happiness for the Godhead and for all moral creatures must be an intelligent recognition of all moral relationships and a devoted fulfilment of all obligations perceived by the mind.**

This unchangeable condition of happiness is a willingness to conform our lives to the dictates of intelligence, or to live in a manner that is right and proper in all our moral relations. The Godhead are fulfilling Their obligations with absolute perfection, and thus it is said that "*God*



*is light*" (1 Jn 1:5). We are to conduct ourselves according to the enlightenment received from our own minds as they perceive our moral relations and obligations, and from the Bible as the Word of God (Jn 3:19-21). God will never require anything that is arbitrary, but only what is founded in absolute reason and truth. This involves the perpetual recognition of God as the Supreme Ruler of the moral universe and others equal with ourselves as happy subjects of the kingdom of God:

Ps 5:2 Ps 84:3 Mt 5:3 Mt 6:33 Mt 7:1-23 Mt 18:1-4 Jn 3:3 Ro 14:17

## The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments were given to define man's obligations (Ga 3:19) and can never be changed or suspended in our present relationships (Ps 19:7, Mt 5:17, Ro 7:12, 1 Tim 1:8). As recorded in Ex 20:1-17 and Dt 5:1-22, they require:

1. Supreme love to God (Dt 6:5, forbidding every form of mental idolatry)
2. Prohibit the making and worshipping of images
3. Declare against false swearing, blasphemy, and the irreverent use of the name of God
4. Against profanation of the Sabbath and idleness
5. Command honour and love to parents
6. Declare against murder
7. Adultery
8. Theft
9. False witness or mis-representations of every sort and,
10. Covetousness, a dissatisfied state of mind which the New Testament calls idolatry (Ep 5:15, Col 3:5)

Evidently Moses and the people thought that the law was holy, blessed and reasonable, and that they were able to keep it if they so chose:

Ex 24:3 Dt 5:1 Dt 6:24-25 Dt 10:12-13 Dt 11:22 Dt 26:16-19  
Dt 28:47, 58-59 Dt 30:8, 11-14

Evidently Joshua also thought so (Jos 22:5), also Ezra (Ez 7:23-26), also David (Ps 19:7, 40:8) and another psalmist (Ps 119:165-168), also a prophet (2 Kgs 17:13, 7-18), also Daniel (Dan 9:9-11).

## Jesus and the Ten Commandments

The Lord Jesus reaffirmed the perpetuity of the Ten Commandments and divided them in a twofold way: Mt 22:36-40, Mk 12:28-34, Lk 10:25-28. *“On these two commandments hang (is being hung or suspended) all the law and the prophets”* (Mt 22:40).

1. *“The first and great commandment”* supreme obligation of love to God, embracing the first four of the Ten Commandments. This was previously summarized by Moses in Dt 6:5 (3-7).
2. *“The second”* equal obligation and love to our fellow men, embracing the last six of the Ten Commandments. This was previously given by God through Moses, Le 19:18, and by the Lord in Mt 7:12.

## Love summarizes the Ten Commandments

**New Testament revelation further reduces the Ten Commandments to one word “love”.** Ro 13:8-10, Ga 5:14, 1 Tim 1:5, Jas 2:8-10 “Love” as here used is not basically an emotional quality, or a static inactive something, but rather a voluntary state of impartial good-will toward all moral beings, which results in a conduct according to intelligence and truth without any admixture of arbitrariness. C. G. Finney wrote:

*“Love is benevolence or good willing. . . , It consists in choosing the highest good of God and of universal-being, for its own intrinsic value, in a spirit of entire consecration to this as the ultimate end of existence”.*

Systematic Theology, 1878, pp. 135-136

Man’s moral obligation becomes very simple and logical. It is to live according to intelligence or according to what is true in our moral relationships. It is to fit ourselves into the true perspective of the moral universe and be willing to live accordingly. It is to refuse to be a misfit in the realm of God. It is to be willing to live like God lives. *“YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY”* (1 Pe 1:16).

Holiness is a descriptive term of all who are motivated by a voluntary disposition of love. Just as *“God is love”* (1 Jn 4:8, 16), so *“everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God”* (1 Jn 4:7). Christians are admonished: *“Keep yourselves in the love of God”* (Jude 21), *“Love is the fulfilling of the law”* (Ro 13:10). An attitude of loving benevolence toward all, is all that God asks or can ask (1 Jn 5:3). Love, or a conformity to intelligence, therefore, is the unalterable condition of happiness for all moral beings for both God and man.

## The Right Exercise of Free Choice

### **Man was to be regulated by an appeal to the right exercise of free choice in a Moral Government.**

Moral government is an association of moral beings under intelligent supervision of a benevolent Ruler. Moral government is an arrangement to regulate the conduct of moral beings by enlightening their minds as to what actions are right and proper, and by solemn pronouncement that certain consequences will follow right action and opposite consequences wrong action. Moral government, therefore, functions upon the principle of promising rewards for obedience and threatening appropriate punishment for disobedience. The subject is allowed to determine for himself what consequences shall be his.

A moral being or moral agent is a creature capable of right and wrong action, or a being endowed with the ability to perceive what is right and proper conduct in his various relations and thus able to be governed by truth addressed to his intelligence. Moral government must be founded upon truth that can be perceived by the mind, so that the idea of *oughtness* can be developed in the minds of the subjects. The need for such government to guarantee the rights and well-being of all moral beings must be affirmed by the reason. The worthiness and ability of the Supreme Governor must be recognized. It thus becomes the obligation of the Supreme Ruler to govern and the subjects to submit to such wise and necessary rulership.

Moral creatures are a distinct order of creation, the only classification bearing "*the image of God*" and obviously cannot be regulated by the same procedures as the balance of creation. Every influence consistent with his moral freedom is being brought to bear upon men's personality to get him to make the right choices:

Dt 30:19 Josh 24:15 Is 1:19-20 Jer 21:8 Mt 23:37 Jn 5:40 Ro 2:5-11 Re 3:20

Moral beings must be allowed to be the author of their own actions or their created *image* will be rendered inoperative. If the may or may not of free choice is not allowed to exist, then moral government ceases and all becomes a government of cause and effect. If man was created as a being whose actions had to be caused, God might delight in the profoundness of His operations but could never experience the joy of observing moral creatures who choose of their own self-caused volition to be in happy submission and admiration of His great attributes and moral character (2 Chr 16:9, Zeph 3:17). It must at once be obvious that absolute control over moral beings acting in their created ability and freedom of choice is an impossibility. The crowning feature of their existence is that they have been given the freedom to originate their own actions, which must be uncertain and unpredictable in any final analysis. The Lord appeared to Abraham and said: "*I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless*" (Ge 17:1). If there was any way for God to cause Abraham to walk perfectly, then all would become mechanical and moral values would evaporate. Moral government involves an amazing study in contrasts as the great God is represented as appealing in humility to the heart of man, so profoundly small in limitations, to conform to His wise and holy ways in blessed fellowship (as Re 3:20). It is the very essence of moral government that man is the sole author of his own actions. While God exerts strong persuasive influences, in no sense is God the cause of man's moral choices.

## Free Responsible Moral Action

**Free responsible moral action is to be distinguished from all that result from external or internal causation.**

All substances and creatures of every sort must be under some form of government or regulation, or total chaos will result. God would be negligent if He should allow such a catastrophe to develop. Possessing the ability to create, God must also possess the ability to control, as much as is possible in the nature of the case, *"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns"* (Re 19:6). *"The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all"* (Ps 103:19). *"The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works . . . Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations"* (Ps 145:9-13).

The ovations of heaven will testify to God's righteous rulership *"Great and marvellous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!"* (Re 15:3).

1. From actions in inanimate creation under the law of cause and effects Is 45:5-7, 12, 18, Col 1:16-17, He 1:1-3. Here Divine omnipotence operates by sheer force, either directly or by what we call the laws of nature. Created substances, great and small, do not possess a life of growth or self-locomotion and must be perpetually acted upon to produce whatever results are desired. The cause being brought into existence, the result always follows. This is a simple procedure to a God of unbounding energy and immeasurable intelligence.
2. From actions in animate non-moral creation under instinct, often supplemented by direct Divine impulses: Ge 9:2, Dt 32:11-12, 1 Kgs 17:4, 6, Mt 8:20, 17:27. In these more intricate areas of creation most mysterious entities have been incorporated, which produce growth with profound results, establish tendencies of life, and all sorts of curious actions - all of which is totally unexplainable. No doubt these unending marvels of created instincts and impulses to action have been brought into existence to overwhelm man with proof of the Divine existence. From all these wonders man establishes inner conclusions that can never be expressed. They create obligation to recognize Deity by sheer mental impact.  
  
In non-moral government, under the law of cause and effect, under implanted instincts, or by direct Divine impulses, the results are always certain to occur simply because there is no alternative to do otherwise. God designed and created these various existences to be controlled in just this manner. The results may be admirable as a tribute to Divine wisdom and power, but there can be no praise-worthiness or blame-worthiness, since all results are simply the product of Divine causation.
3. From actions of moral beings under governmental providence, which often involves a temporary suspension of moral freedom by God's direct agency:

Ex 11:9-10   Dt 2:25   Josh 11:20   Ps 22:28   Dan 4:17   Lk 4:28-30  
Jn 7:30   Re 17:17

Since our first parents refused to remain intelligent as voluntary members of the kingdom of God, God has had to introduce innovations in His moral government to maintain a workable world order and to bring to pass various events in His periods of mercy. Selfishness does not have what it takes to produce a tolerable society if allowed to proceed unrestrained. Man refusing voluntary restraint, God in mercy had to introduce methods of producing involuntary restraint for man's own ultimate good. This was not a part of God's original plan and would not have been necessary if sin had not introduced the confusion of moral values and relationships.

The Scriptures present a whole array of passages describing God's operations in the enforced realm of providence, which are in complete contrast to the many passages that portray God's humble appeal for entrance and acceptance in men's hearts. God's operations in this abnormal realm are varied and complicated. As we shall see, oppressive measures have had to be instituted against man from the realm of nature and from the animal kingdom. Instead of pleasant occupation as an outlet for intelligent activity, toil and struggle, pain and hardship, with death at the end of life, have had to be introduced as a judgment for sin and to restrain its further development.

In all forms of regulation by force, by instinct, or by mental coercion, the exact desired effects are achieved. The nature of control is certain and positive because an adequate cause has been provided to achieve a definite result, as contrasted with the uncertainty involved when man is allowed to choose his own actions unrestrained in moral accountability.

## Man's Enlightenment

**Man's enlightenment upon his relations and obligations is the directive of right moral action and moral government.**

If man is to be held accountable for his actions, he must not only be endowed with intellectual ability but must actually understand what his essential obligations to God and to his fellow men are. He must be exposed to an atmosphere of truth that will foster and not hinder these spontaneous mental deductions.

Right action can only follow right understanding. He must also understand that moral government does not consist in his being caused to act rightly toward other moral beings, but in his being admonished and urged to do so enforced by appropriate consequences. He must have some understanding of the rightfulness and blessedness of the consequences that follow virtuous action, and the rightfulness and awful tragedy of the consequences that follow wrongful and rebellious action. These must be so vivid in his imagination as to be an incentive to obey the light of conscience and fear disobedience.

We now ask, "Do all men possess such a compelling enlightenment of mind and conscience as to render them guilty for disobedience and worthy of the threatened eternal punishment of separation from God? If so, what do the Scriptures reveal as the source of this information?"

1. **Man is exposed to very great moral light through his natural observations.**

*"Light"* is a figurative expression referring to that which reveals to us what our actions ought to be. *"For everything that becomes visible is Light"* (Ep 5:13). We have seen that *"God is light"*, or is absolute moral perfection in character and conduct, and that the Lord Jesus was *"the light of the world"*. Man is subject to unending observations which portray to him his obligation to God and man. The Scripture affirms the great guilt of every person who has attained the age of accountability and is in possession of his reasoning powers.

- (a) These natural observations are the basis of guilt and condemnation: Ro 1:18-20, 2:11-12, 14-16, 3:19, 23 (*"all the world is guilty"*). Notice that all who have never heard of the Bible nor of the Gospel are still *"without excuse"* (Ro 1:20). While the Gospel greatly adds guilt to those rejecting it, it is not the primary basis of condemnation.
- (b) This moral light appeals directly to the mind for acceptance and may be dimmed or its force eliminated by philosophical reasoning: Acts 17:28, Ro 1:18, Col 2:8, 2 Tim 4:4. Our native unreasoned reactions are very dependable. If we do not want to comply with them, we set about to reason them away. It is thus that men *"suppress the truth in unrighteousness"* (Ro 1:18), and are taken *"captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men"* (Col 2:8).

The idea in the last passage is that of being carried off as a prey or as booty, a continuous action.

- (c) The sources of this moral light, from which we build our concepts of reality. Our inner personalities and abilities are profound to contemplate (Ps 8:4). There is within us the ability to think, to reason, to view facts and draw conclusions therefrom, to react in emotional response, and to originate our own actions all functioning as an integral whole in a physical existence. Our bodies or external selves are wonderfully made, beyond comprehension, enabling us to contact the world without through our five senses: **Seeing, Hearing, Tasting, Smelling, and Touching** (Ps 139:14). Our surroundings or external observations could provide an eternity of investigation from the infinitesimal to the inconceivably immense (Ps 19:1, Is 40:26, Jer 10:12, Ro 1:20). These wonders so overwhelm the mind with evidence of a great Designer and Creator that great effort must be put forth by all who refuse to be guided thereby in their moral decisions. Daily contact with our fellow men places us, secondarily, under human obligation.

2. Man is exposed to direct moral influences of the Godhead, enlightening the mind and quickening the conscience: Jn 1:9, 16:8-11, Ro 1:18, 2:15, Acts 17:27, Jn 12:32 (there must be a mysterious drawing power of love being exerted to all who will in the least respond to enlightenment).
3. Man was given special moral enlightenment by Divine revelation before the Fall, progressively after the Fall, the giving of the law through Moses, and finally through the advent and Saviourhood of Christ. Adam and Eve experienced happy climaxes of God's visitations before their rebellion (Ge 3:8-10), and had specific instructions as to that submission and confidence that would please God (Ge 2:16-17, 3:2-3).

## Enforcement of Moral Government

**Pronounced consequences of right and wrong moral action are the enforcement of moral government.**

Sanction as a legal term is *“that which induces observance of law or custom”*. In law it is *“the detriment, loss of reward, or other coercive intervention, annexed to a violation of a law as a means of enforcing the law”*. Sanctions may be considered as positive and negative, rewards of blessings or penal consequences of suffering. As a simpler term, the word *consequences* has been chosen to represent the sanctions that the righteous God imposes upon moral creatures for their conduct.

The idea of sanctions or consequences, therefore, is unavoidably associated with moral government or a government of moral beings. A moral law is a description of what is right conduct for a moral being in a given relationship. Moral law is always an expression of true intelligence and is to be a help toward maintaining a happy relationship in moral government. But for a moral law to have any force or persuasive energy, consequences must be pronounced to follow conformity or non-conformity. Submission to loving and intelligent rules of action always will be rewarded by blessing and happiness. Rebellion or a refusal to be intelligent in one’s manner of living always will be rewarded with appropriate suffering and unhappiness. The whole strength and effectiveness of moral government rests in the pronouncement of just consequences and in their unwavering fulfilment. Apart from consequences, moral law would merely be advice and would achieve nothing toward happy moral relations which is the purpose of moral government.

### 1. There must of necessity be consequences in moral government:

(a) Or moral government must collapse, for this is the only means of controls:

Dt 11:26-28   Dt 30:15-20   Is 3:10-11   Is 26:9   Jer 18:7-10   Jn 3:36  
Ro 2:6-10   Ro 6:16

(b) Or, God would be neglectful and cease to be love if He did not enforce His government, for the good of His moral creatures: Ge 18:25, Dt 7:9-11.

(c) Or, God would cease to be righteous and impartial if He did not treat moral beings according to their actions:

Ps 7:9   Jer 9:24   1 Co 4:1   2 Tim 4:8   He 6:10

### 2. These consequences must be according to exact justice.

(a) God declares His strict impartiality, or that He does not favour one above another in personal salvation or consequences:

Dt 10:17	2 Chr 19:7	Ps 62:12	Prov 24:12
Eze 18:30	Lk 20:21 (said of Christ)	Acts 10:34-35	Ro 2:6-11
Ga 2:6	Ep 6:9	Col 3:25	Jas 2:8-9
1 Pe 1:17	Re 2:23		

(b) They are based solely upon personal merit or demerit as known only to God:

Dt 24:16    2 Chr 25:4    Ps 94:23    Jer 31:30    Jer 32:19    Eze 18:20  
 Ro 2:6-11    Ro 14:11-12    1 Pe 1:17

(c) They have and will be in exact accord or in proportion to merit and demerit Jer 32:19, Ro 2:6, 12 (guilt in proportion to moral light) Ga 6:7-8.

## Rewards

**The rewards of conformity to God's loving and reasonable requirements are most blessed.**

These happy experiences are what man was created and endowed to enjoy.

They were to exist in unbroken abundance forever. Man in happy submission to God:

1. Experiences favour and friendship with God and with his fellow men:

Ge 3:8    Ge 5:24    Ge 15:11    Ex 19:5-6    Ex 33:10-11    Mt 23:37  
 Jn 14:23    2 Co 6:16-18    Ep 2:22    Re 3:20

2. Allowed to partake of the life-giving energy of God:

Ge 2:9 ("*tree of life. . . in the midst*")    2:16 ("*freely eat*")    Jn 1:4  
 Jn 4:14    Jn 5:21, 26    Jn 6:33, 56-57  
 Ro 8:11    1 Jn 5:12

Before the Fall man was permitted to "*freely eat*" of "*the tree of life*", which evidently maintained his body in perfect health and prevented any deterioration. Through grace, the resurrected Christ is to be made Living and real through the indwelling Holy Spirit to become the source of our spiritual life and energize our bodies to greater endurance.

3. **Results in a blessed state of peace, joy, and praises.**

(a) A blessed state of peace in the depths of the hearts:

Ps 29:11    Ps 119:165    Is 26:3    Jn 14:27    Acts 24:16    Ro 8:6  
 Ro 14:16    2 Co 13:11    Phil 4:7    1 Jn 3:19-21

(b) The buoyancy of overflowing joy:

Le 23:40 (Feast of Tabernacles)    Dt 30:9-10 (God's rejoicing)  
 Neh 12:43    Ps 16:11  
 Zeph 3:17 (God's Joy)    Ps 89:15-16  
 Jn 16:22, 24    Ro 14:17, 22  
 Ep 5:18-21    1 Pe 1:8



(c) Spontaneous praise or worship, with singing:

1 Chr 16:31, 34    1 Chr 29:9-13    2 Chr 5:13-14    Ps 47:6-7    Ps 98:4-6  
Ps 139:14        Lk 24:50-53    Acts 2:46-47    Ep 5:20    Phil 1:11  
He 13:5, 15       Re 19:5-7

**4. An endless duration of life in God's presence: Jn 17:3.**

- (a) Adam and Eve continued in perfect happiness with their Creator and with one another before their rebellion: Ge 1:27-31, 2:7-9, 15-17, 3:2-3.
- (b) The blessed Gospel makes possible a reconciliation to God with endless duration of life for all returning to conformity:

Ps 23:6            Dan 12:2    Mt 25:34, 46    Lk 18:28-30    Lk 20:34-36  
Jn 3:14-16        Jn 4:14    Jn 5:24        Jn 6:50-51    Jn 14:2-3  
Ro 6:22-23       2 Co 5:1    Tit 3:7        He 5:9        1 Jn 2:25  
1 Jn 5:10-13, 20    Jude 21

By the great grace and mercy of God through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, repentant sinners may be restored in some respects to joys even greater than Adam and Eve experienced before their rebellion against God.



## Rebellion against the loving and reasonable moral government of God

- *“Sin is lawlessness”* (1 Jn 3:14).
- *“They (all men) are without excuse”* (Ro 1:20).
- *“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever”* (Ro 1:28).
- *“They refused to have God in their knowledge”* (Ro 1:28). *“They did not see fit to acknowledge God or approve Him or consider Him worth the knowing”* (Ro 1:28).
- *“We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances...nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings... Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law... ”* (Dan 9:5, 10, 11).
- *“We have all become as one who is unclean, and all our righteousness (our best deeds of rightness and justice) are as filthy rags or a polluted garment”* (Is 64:6).
- *“If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea”* (Is 48:18).

We have seen that the Godhead are revealed in the Bible as profound moral Beings who possess intelligence, or the ability to reason upon absolute truth and design endless new existences. The Godhead also possess the ability to experience or have emotional reactions as a result of what is being thought upon or has been created. There is Divine delight or enthusiastic response to moral character being achieved and manifested in the Divine operations. The Godhead also possess the mysterious ability of creativeness or self-motivation, by which the energies of personality are directed to certain objectives and occupations. This ability of free will or self-determination is the essence of personality. Actions of God's will are not caused by any part or deposit in the Divine Personalities, but are self-caused. The Godhead have not done all that is possible to be done but have conducted Themselves and have brought into existence the universe and all creatures for wise and benevolent reasons.

We have also seen that man has been blessed beyond words in being endowed with the moral image of his Creator in tiny replica. Man is more than a machine or substance that must be activated by force. Man is more than an intricate creature that must be propelled and energized

by instinct. Man is rather a moral being who can reason and delight in the moral character and greatness of his Creator. Man was to be thrilled in observing the processes of Divine intelligence and power manifested everywhere about him. Man unavoidably realizes that he is a part of this whole structure and has obligations toward the happiness of all moral beings. This enlightenment and understanding of his moral relations becomes the basis of his choices.

## **Holiness and Sin are Free Voluntary Acts**

**Holiness and sin are free voluntary acts of will or states of mind, and, although strongly influenced, are not caused by any internal force of nature, tendency, or instinct, nor by persuasion from external sources.**

As has been discussed, man may choose to conform to what he perceives to be reasonable and right or he may choose not to conform. Moral choices simply cannot be controlled by any kind of force or direct Divine energy, or moral character has no meaning. They cannot be controlled by implanted instinct or man becomes an intricate mechanism with automatic propelling responses rather than a moral being. Moral choices are self-originated in view of what is perceived by the mind. This makes it possible for man to choose not to be reasonable and launch out on a course of rebellion against all that is right and proper. We may classify all actions of the will and establish what actions of will determine moral character, as follows:

### **What is Moral Character**

**Moral character is a voluntary state of activity or conduct that takes place in the experiences and consciousness of moral beings. Moral character is a moral action or personal action.**

1. Moral character is not something back of the will causing action, but the action of the will itself. It is not a tangible something lodging somewhere in our personality, not something mysteriously compelling us to action.
2. **Moral character is what we are doing with our endowments of personality and the moral light that we possess. It is the thoughts we think, the attitudes we have, the things we say, the actions that we take.**
3. **Moral action and compulsory action are antagonistic in every sense. What is free cannot be compelled, and what is compelled cannot be free.**
4. **Moral action is therefore, free or self-originated action, and moral character is a description of what habitual actions are taking place.**
5. Scripture addresses man as having within himself the ability and responsibility of self-decision:

Ge 3:11	Dt 11:26-28	Dt 27:1, 10, 26	Dt 28:1-2, 15, 45-48, 58
Dt 30:15-20	Josh 24:15, 20-24	1 Sam 7:3	1 Sam 8:7
1 Kgs 18:21	Is 1:19-20	Is 66:3-4	Jer 18:7-10
Jer 21:8	Jer 36:3, 7	Eze 5:11	Eze 20:7-8
Mt 23:37	Lk 10:4	Lk 19:14 (12-27)	Jn 1:11
Jn 3:36	Jn 5:40	Jn 7:17	Acts 7:51
Ro 6:16-18	He 11:25	1 Jn 2:17	Re 3:20
Re 22:17			

## Moral action

**Moral action or acts of will are positive and definite, and in no sense can be partial in that an object of pursuit can be partly chosen and partly not chosen at the same time.**

1. The will always acts as a unit in a given instance. The will cannot be half-right and half-wrong, cannot partly obey and partly disobey.
2. The will may choose a given course of action at one instant and choose another course of action at a succeeding instant, but to choose both at once is plainly impossible.
3. There cannot be a mixed moral character at a particular time. Men are either obeying God up to the moral light that they possess or they are not doing so. We cannot choose to be virtuous and selfish at the same time.
4. That actions of will cannot be of a mixed moral character, or that attitudes of life may reverse themselves but not be partial or mixed, is set forth in contrast in the following passages:
  - (a) We are either living in separation from or in direct consciousness of God's manifested presence (compare the following scriptures):
 

(Ep 4:18, 2 Pe 1:4)	1 Jn 5:12	(Jn 16:3, Jn 17:3)	(Jn 8:44, Mt 6:32)
(Jas 4:4, Jas 2:23)	Col 2:13	Ro 8:6	Re 3:17
1 Tim 6:6	Lk 9:24	1 Co 10:20	1 Jn 1:3
  - (b) We are either living in moral darkness or in moral light as God is:
 

1 Jn 1:5   Mt 6:22-23   1 Jn 1:6-7   2 Co 6:14   Jn 8:12   Jn 3:19   Ep 5:8
  - (c) We are either bad or good as to moral characters:
 

Mt 7:15-20   Mt 12:33-35   Jn 3:20-21   2 Co 6:14   He 3:12   Lk 8:1  
Jas 3:11-1
  - (d) We are either disobeying or obeying God's reasonable requirements:
 

Mt 7:21-23	1 Jn 2:15-17	Ro 6:16-18	(Ep 2:3, 1 Pe 1:14)
(2 Th 1:8, He 5:9)	1 Tim 1:9	Jn 3:20-21	(Ro 2:8, 1 Pe 1:22)

(e) We are either living supremely for temporal or for eternal values:

2 Co 4:18      Mt 6:19-21    Mt 6:24      Col 3:2      1 Jn 2:15  
 Ro 12:2      2 Tim 3:2      1 Pe 1:15      Ro 8:6, 13    2 Tim 3:4  
 1 Co 2:14-15    2 Co 5:17      Ep 4:22-24

(f) We are either impenitent and rebellious or penitent and repentant:

Ro 2:4                      (Ro 2:5, Ep 4:32)      Acts 7:51    He 12:9  
 (He 3:7-9, Jas 4:10)    2 Tim 3:38              2 Pe 3:9      2 Tim 4:4  
 Mt 11:15                  (2 Th 2:10, 1 Th 2:13)    Jas 4:6      1 Pe 5:5  
 (Mt 7:15, Jn 10:4)      1 Pe 2:25                  1 Th 1:9      Lk 18:11-13

(g) We are either foolish or wise in the way in which we are living:

Mt 7:24-27    Mt 25:1-12    Ro 1:14    Tit 3:3    Mt 24:45    2 Th 3:2  
 Ro 12:1      Ep 5:15

(h) We are either inwardly defiled or purified:

1 Jn 1:8-9    Tit 1:15    (2 Pe 2:20, 1 Pe 1:22)    1 Co 6:11    Re 22:11

(i) We are either in bondage to sin or are delivered from sin by the grace of God: Jn 8:34, 36, Ro 6:17, 22.

(j) We are either in a state of doubt or in a state of faith in a given instance:

Jn 3:36    Mk 9:22-23    Mt 8:8, 10, 13    Mk 11:23    Mt 28:17    Ro 4:20  
 He 11:6    Jas 1:6

## Levels of Moral Actions

All actions of will are related to each other, but are not all of the same importance.

1. From early life we associate the indulgences we like with the ways in which they are achieved. The baby early learns that the way to get picked up or fed is to cry with persistence.
2. The process as to what means produce certain desired results becomes highly developed in the subconscious mind, soon becomes an unrealized instinctive habit.
3. The most important actions of will may be called ultimate or supreme choices, as these establish the purpose and direction of our lives.
  - (a) We may choose or purpose to live intelligently and render loving obligations to our great Creator and Benefactor, and to our fellow men, seeking our own happiness only in its proper proportion. These obligations, we have seen, impose themselves upon all moral beings because of their natural observations, in addition to direct Divine enlightenment.

- (b) Or, we may choose to live unintelligently, with a purpose to concentrate upon our own happiness and neglect the well being of God and of our fellow men.
- 4. A great multitude of choices are made to bring to pass those things which we think will fulfill the above ultimate or supreme choice. They may be called subordinate choices since they are made because of a higher purposeful commitment. Subordinate choices are very great in number and often very complex, since there are various grades with some depending upon others. Thus we may divide and subdivide the pattern of our lives.
- 5. Subordinate choices have to be brought to pass which involve no new plans, only a fulfilling of previous decisions, and thus may be called executive volitions or resultant choices.

## Moral Actions vs Moral Character

What actions of will are we to examine to establish moral character as virtuous or sinful?

1. Not merely executive volitions or resultant choices.
  - (a) These are merely energies of locomotion put forth to accomplish some decision that has been previously made.
  - (b) Thus, we must look to previous decisions to determine why the observed action is taking place.
2. Not by looking merely at the means chosen, or by looking at subordinate choices or decisions.
  - (a) These choices were made to further a previous choice that was made.
  - (b) Since there is a higher reason for the decisions we are viewing, we must progress further up the chain of action before establishing moral character.
3. **Moral character can only be determined by examining the ultimate or supreme choice that has been made in the exercise of moral freedom.**
  - (a) Since there is no further reason why the choice was made, except that the endowment of free will and personal functions has furnished the ability to originate personal choice.
  - (b) Every individual does what he does either because he loves God supremely and his fellow men equally and desires the happiness of all moral beings according to their relative worth or because he loves himself supremely and hopes to further his own happiness, all things considered.
4. The motivating purpose of *heart*, then, is the only gauge of moral character. As our physical *heart* goes, so goes our body, and as our inner choice or determination of *heart* or will is, so is our moral character.

- (a) Many passages in the Bible use the word *heart* to relate to this inner state of praiseworthiness or blame-worthiness. God is frequently said to search out the purpose of the heart as a basis of determining guilt or commendation:

Dt 5:29	Dt 8:2	1 Sam 16:7	1 Kgs 11:9-11
1 Chr 28:9	Prov 4:23	Jer 17:9-10	Eze 18:30-32
Mt 6:21 (21-24)	Mk 7:18-23	Lk 8:15	Acts 8:21 (18-24)
1 Th 2:4	He 3:7-8, 15	He 4:12-13	

Also see:

1 Sam 12:20, 24	1 Kgs 8:61	1 Kgs 9:4	2 Kgs 20:3
1 Chr 29:9	2 Chr 19:9	Ps 7:9-10	Ps 26:2
Ps 32:10-11	Ps 36:9-10	Ps 101:1-5	Ps 119:7
Ps 125:4	Ps 139:23	Prov 17:3	Prov 21:2
Dan 1:8	Mt 11:28-30	Mt 12:33-35	Mt 15:7-9
Lk 16:14-15	Acts 2:46-47	Acts 4:32	Ro 6:17
1 Co 4:5	2 Co 9:7	Ep 6:5	1 Th 3:11-13
He 13:9	Re 2:23		

5. **Sin is not, therefore, an abstract thing which invades and lodges somewhere in our personalities, but is rather an orderly sequence of wrong choices and conduct, involving our whole personalities, which we have launched out upon and energetically persist in until we bow in repentance at the feet of the loving Saviour.**

## Man's rebellion against God

**Man rebelled against God by refusing to continue conforming to God's loving and reasonable requirements - the great tragedy of the moral world.**

**When God said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness", God was making the decision of self-limitation.** Everything that had been created up to this point was under a law of causation, either by force or instinct. There could be no fellowship, properly speaking, for this involves an ability of reciprocal action. Voluntary responsible action involves the possibility of non-compliance or of contrary choice - the freedom of uncertainty. Virtuous action must be voluntary action. If no contrary choice, then no virtuous choice and no possibility of complacent fellowship. But moral beauty is exceedingly more valuable to God than the sheer mass proportions of the vast universe. The thought of happy reactive creatures, capable of understanding something of His true spiritual essence, was indeed intriguing to the great God. The fall of man, therefore, was possible by virtue of man's created endowments, which made their abuse possible.



## Man Was Created Perfect

Man was created perfect in every way and started out on the pathway of life with proper inner balance and perspective (Ge 1:31). We have seen that:

1. Moral character is moral action, what we are doing with our personalities.
2. Moral character cannot be created; it must be man's voluntary choices.
3. Man had every advantage to form his own moral character and become firmly established in righteousness. He lacked no ability, had delightful discoveries of God's character in his surroundings, had blessed moral influences of Divine fellowship, had human companionship, and had special enlightenment.

## Man in Eden

Man chose to follow his Creator's example and established a moral character of virtue and love, as evidenced by plain statements and implications:

1. Man had fellowship with God in naming the animals: Ge 2:16-20.
2. Also certainly at Eve's creation: Ge 2:21-24.
3. A tragic change in Divine fellowship took place after the Fall: Ge 3:8-11.
4. Man partook of "*the tree of life*", was later expelled: Ge 3:22-24.
5. Eve's reply to Satan indicates her obedience to God's command: Ge 3:2-3.
6. Relationship of Adam and Eve radically changed after the Fall, so must have been virtuous and unselfish before: Ge 3:17-11, 2:25.

## Adam and Eve's Rebellion

Adam and Eve of their own free wills rebelled against the loving and intelligent will of their Creator, by blinding their minds to the obvious truths of their relationships and revolting against all the moral persuasion that God could exert to keep them in the path of virtue and happiness.

1. It was a positive act of rebellion by both Eve and Adam: Ge 3:6.
2. It was a violation of a known command, not a weakness or deficiency: Ge 3:3.
3. It was a dethronement of the supremacy of God and intelligent love, and an enthronement of the supremacy of self-gratification and self-centeredness.
4. The inner balance of self-control was completely disrupted, emotions reigned

## Adam and Eve blame God

### Adam and Eve immediately sought to excuse themselves and blame God.

1. Adam, not deceived (1 Tim 2:14), blamed God for creating Eve: Ge 3:12.
2. Eve blamed Satan as personified in the serpent (Ge 3:13), and in effect blamed God for permitting the temptation.
3. Eve was deceived at the moment of indulgences: 2 Co 11:3, 1 Tim 2:14.
4. This deception was voluntary, after a rejection of moral light and understanding.
  - (a) Eve plainly understood God's requirements and voiced no complaints against any unreasonableness, as she took God's side against Satan: Ge 3:2-3.
  - (b) The word *transgression* in 1 Tim 2:14 denotes a violation of known law.
  - (c) **Satan is allowed only to blind "the minds of them which believe not" (2 Co 4:4), or those who refuse or reject moral enlightenment.**

## Excessive Temptation

God will never permit excessive temptation to anyone who is responsive to the moral enlightenment that he is exposed to (1 Co 10:13). God only allows Satan to bring his "*strong delusion*" to those who receive not "*the love of the truth who believe a lie, and who have "pleasure in unrighteousness"*" (2 Th 2:10-12).

## Assuming blame

Thus mankind must take the full blame upon themselves for tragic rebellion and the ever-increasing chaos of sin. Sin is an unintelligent abuse of God given endowments of personality. In this abuse man has gone contrary to all persuasive energies that the Godhead could exert to keep man in the path of intelligent submission. The passions of selfish desire were elevated to the place of supremacy, with the intelligence being directed to be their servant.

## Old Testament words for Man's sin

**The Old Testament uses words to describe man's sin that show overwhelmingly man's free will or voluntariness in his life of sin, and thus man's great guilt.**

Man is described as a rebel against a loving God, not as a subject of pity who has lost his ability of will and thus could not help sinning. Each is held accountable for his own sin, not that of Adam or his forefathers. Sin is a violation of moral light, a refusal to conform to what

is known and perceived. Quite frequently we find two or three or more different words used in a single verse or context to describe sin, as in Ex 34:7, Ps 32:5, and Dan 9:5. This is in accord with a Hebrew idiom of repetition, wherein the same event is described in different words with slightly different shades of meaning for emphasis and fullness of thought. The seriousness of sin is according to one's understanding of what the will of God is. Who can review the penetrating descriptions of sin in the Old Testament and say that sin is a small thing, committed through a weakness or inability of will? Every type of word is used to present its voluntariness and viciousness. In the following summary of words we have a progression of wickedness represented.

### **Sin is:**

1. To miss or err from the mark, to wander from the path of rectitude planned for man:  
Ex 20:20 Ex 32:30-34 1 Kgs 8:47 Eze 18:4, 20, 24 Dan 9:5, 15
2. To act perversely, or to twist and distort moral character, usually rendered *iniquity*:  
Ex 34:7, 9 Le 16:21-22 1 Kgs 8:47 Ps 32:2, 5 Is 53:6 Eze 18:20, 30  
Dan 9:5
3. To transgress or break away from just authority, to be contrary:  
Le 16:15-16, 21 Job 34:37 Is 1:2 Is 53:8 Eze 18:28 Ezq 30-31  
Hosea 7:13
4. To refuse to obey or hearken, a verb basically meaning to listen or attend to:  
Dt 28:45, 62 Neh 9:16-17 Dan 9:10 Ex 24:7 Dt 8:20
5. To refuse to serve God, a verb basically meaning to labour, to work, to work for another, thus to worship and serve:  
Dt 10:12 1 Sam 12:24 Dt 8:19 Dt 30:17 (15-18) Josh 24:14-15  
Neh 9:35 Jer 4:3
6. To act treacherously or deceitfully, usually rendered *trespass*:  
Le 5:15 Le 6:2 Nu 31:16 Dt 32:51 Josh 7:1 Neh 1:8
7. To be rebellious (to make or tend to make God bitter):  
Nu 20:23-24 Nu 27:12-14 Dt 21:18-21 1 Sam 12:13-15 Josh 1:18  
Is 1:20 Neh 9:17
8. To be stubbornly disobedient, also rendered to rebel:  
Nu 14:9 Josh 22:29 Neh 9:26 Eze 2:3 Eze 20:38 Dan 9:5
9. To be wicked or impious (with an idea of strong excitement):  
1 Kgs 8:47 Ps 18:21 Is 57:20 Dan 9:5,15

10. To live worthlessly or without any worthy purpose (with the idea of emptiness or vanity), often rendered iniquity: Is 41:29 (emptiness of idols), Ps 5:5, 66:18, Is 55:7 (*unrighteous man* or man of emptiness or vanity), Jer 4:14, (vain thoughts), Micah 2:1 (*iniquity*).
11. To be evil (to spoil or dash to pieces the moral worth that God intended):
- Ge 2:9            Ge 6:5    1 Sam 12:17                            20, Ps 7:9 (*wickedness*)  
 Ps 51:4 (*evil*)    Is 1:16    Jer 4:14, 18 (*wickedness*)    Jer 13:23 (*evil*)

## New Testament words for Man's sin

**The New Testament carries forth the same idea of the wickedness and inexcusableness of sin presented in the Old Testament, by the use of many Greek words with different shades of meaning. Each group of words will be presented in an order of importance and in an order of increasing guilt.**

### Sin is:

- To miss or err from the mark, to wander from the path of uprightness and honour planned for man, a misdirection of our faculties:
 

Lk 15:21    Lk 18:13    Lk 24:46-47    Jn 16:8-9    Ro 2:12    Ro 3:23  
 He 10:26    1 Jn 1:7-9    1 Jn 3:4-5    1Jn 5:18
- To trespass, to fall beside or deviate from the right path of life, to stumble:
 

He 6:6    Mt 6:14-15    Ro 4:25    Ep 1:7    Ep 2:1
- To transgress or step by the side of the prescribed path, an overstepping or departure from the way of truth:
 

Mt 15:2-3    Acts 1:25    Ro 2:23-25    Ro 4:15    Ro 5:14    Ga 3:19  
 He 2:2
- To be lawless, or to refuse to conform to Divine law revealed to increase man's understanding of the right way:
 

Mt 7:23    Mt 24:12    Lk 22:37    Acts 2:23    2 Co 6:14    Tit 2:14  
 1 Jn 3:4
- To disobey or be disobedient, to disbelieve or refuse belief (willfully or perversely), to refuse to be persuaded, to be obstinate or uncompliant, from a verb to persuade or be persuaded, with a negative prefix:
 

Jn 3:36    Ro 2:8    Ro 10:21    He 3:18    1 Pe 2:7-8    1 Pe 4:17  
 Ep 2:2    Ep 5:6    Col 3:6    He 4:6    Acts 26:19    Tit 1:16  
 Tit 3:3

6. To do wrong, to be unjust or unrighteous, to refuse to do what is right:

Ro 1:18, 29    Ro 2:8    1 Co 6:9    Col 3:25    2 Th 2:10-12    1 Pe 3:18  
1 Jn 1:19    Re 22:11

7. To be ungodly or to act impiously, without reverential awe toward God:

Ro 1:18    Ro 5:6    1 Tim 1:9    Tit 2:12    1 Pe 4:18    2 Pe 2:6  
Jude 15, 18

8. To be evil, wicked, or depraved in mind and heart:

Mt 12:34-35    Mt 15:19    Mt 22:18    Jn 3:19    Ro 1:29    Ep 6:12  
Col 1:21    He 3:12

From this summary of an extended study of the words used in the Bible to describe sin, we look in vain for any proof that sin is anything else than a wrong action. There is always the idea of locomotion or voluntary activity, not a static or inactive something back of the will, received by heredity, which exercises a causation over the will. The dynamic nature of sin and its solemn guilt is portrayed on every hand in such a way that none need err as to what sin is.

## Sin is a wrong ultimate Choice

**All sin can be resolved into a wrong ultimate choice to seek our own happiness supremely, which involves our whole personality and is persisted in without virtuous interruptions from the dawn of moral accountability.**

## Sin is Always a Wrong Voluntary Attitude

Sin is always a wrong voluntary attitude or purpose of life, or a wrong motive of heart. Sin is not a fixed something back of the will controlling its actions. The will determines the nature or character, rather than the nature the will. We are sinners simply because we choose to sin or live selfishly. We are never held accountable for what we are not the author of. Ability is always the measure of responsibility. God has given us the ability to direct our lives, either according to intelligence in recognition of our obligation to God and to our fellow men, or according to selfishness and unintelligence in the supreme seeking of our own happiness. In this state we deny the rights of other moral beings, even though our mind vigorously protests. There are only these two attitudes of will, one of which must always be chosen. The choice, with all the means that we choose to further this which we call subordinate choices, are always according to the moral light or understanding which we ourselves possess at a given moment, not that which someone else possesses.

We either submit to truth as we perceive it or we refuse so to submit. The essence of sin is set forth in the Scriptures as being in the heart of man or in the purpose of will.

1 Kgs 11:9-11	1 Kgs 15:3	2 Chr 12:14	Ps 28:3	Ps 66:18	Ps 78:37
Ps 95:10	Jer 17:9-10	Eze 14:2-3 (2-8)	Eze 18:30-32	Mt 5:27-30	Mt 9:4
Mt 13:15	Mk 3:5	Mk 7:18-23	Mk 8:17 (13-17)	Lk 21:34	
Acts 8:21 (18-24)	Ro 2:4-6	He 3:7-15			

## It involves our Whole Personality

This wrong voluntary purpose of life or wrong motive of heart involves our whole personality and leaves no room for simultaneous actions from an opposite motive. Man is not to be thought of as a divisible being, with distinct parts that can be segregated and examined independently. Man is rather to be thought of as an integral whole personality with various endowments or abilities incorporated into his consciousness. Each of the abilities involves the whole personality in a unified action. Man is not an impulsive machine. He is a very logical creature, whether he thinks so or not. Actions of a mixed moral character, partly good and partly bad, then, are impossible, as testified to in the following passages:

Mt 6:22-24   Mt 7:17-20   Mt 12:33-35   Jn 3:19-21   Ro 6:6-18   2 Co 5:17   Tit 1:15  
 Jas 3:10-11   1 Jn 1:5-7   1 Jn 2:15

## It is Persistent

This wrong voluntary purpose of life or wrong motive of heart, involving our whole personality, has been persisted in, without virtuous interruptions, from the dawn of moral accountability. We have chosen to live a life of selfishness which reigns supreme until undone by exposure to the cross of Christ. There is no admixture of good or evil, no interruptions when virtue reigns, no suspensions of selfish supremacy. Sinful indulgence in one form or another is continuous. Many factors in our constitution and environment influence our choice of the main form of this selfish gratification. There are humanly amiable as well as base sinners. There are indeed many levels of degradation in sin. God *"will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus"* (Ro 2:16). But all sinners of every description, from those who claim to have *"done many wonderful works"* to those whom God has given *"up unto vile affections"*, have one uniform moral characteristic *"THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE"* (Ro 3:12).

This persistency in sin is also testified to in:

Ge 6:5	Ge 8:21	Ps 10:4	Ps 14:1, 3	(Ps 53:1, 3)	Ps 28:3
Ps 94:11	Eccl 1:14	Is 55:7-9	Is 64:6	Jer 13:23	Jer 17:9-10
Mt 7:21-23	Mt 12:34-35	Ro 1:21	Ro 3:10-12, 23	Ro 6:16-17, 20	Ep 2:1, 3
Ep 5:8	Tit 1:15	Tit 3:3	1 Pe 2:25		

## Men are the authors of their own Rebellion

Men are the authors of their own rebellion against the loving and reasonable moral government of God, and are fully to blame for the entrance of sin into the world and for its persistent

perpetuation from generation to generation.

The Bible is God's personal message to man in which God purposed to satisfy our minds upon the great problems of life. By admitting man into the secrets of Divine reactions and attitudes, God is endeavouring to enlighten man's understanding as to how the tragedy of sin has occurred and why certain eras (time periods) have had to be taken, purposing to bring man to repentance and forgiveness.

1. Sin did not enter the world because man was created deficient in any way. The moral character of the Godhead is revealed to be love, a voluntary state of impartial good-will toward all moral beings (1 Jn 4:8, 16, Ps 86:5, Ro 5:8, 2 Co 13:11). Such a God of love could not fail to produce the best possible system that goodness can produce. The Bible ascribes the creation of all things to the intelligence and wisdom of God:

Ge 1:1, 27 Ge 2:7 Ps 8:3-6 Ps 102:24-27 Jer 51:15 Acts 17:24  
Re 4:11

*"It was very good"* (Ge 1:31).

2. Sin did not enter the world because it was God's will that it should. Holiness and consequent happiness is always God's will for moral beings. Sin and consequent misery is always contrary to God's will.

God designed and created man to experience and enjoy the Divine presence (Zeph 3:17, Acts 7:48, 17:28, Ep 2:22). God has revealed His will to man, which is always to live according to the intelligence or truth of his relations:

Ge 17:1 Le 11:44-45 Dt 10:12-13 Mt 22:37-40 1 Pe 1:15-16 1 Jn 2:17

For this the Ten Commandments were given (Ex 20:1-17). For this the Lord Jesus earnestly prayed (Mt 6:10). It is God's revealed will that all should be saved (Jn 3:17, 17:21, 1 Tim 2:3-6, 2 Pe 3:9).

God must always have desired man to be holy and happy.

3. Sin did not enter the world because God failed to exert every effort to prevent its occurrence in a perfect creation. In early history the Holy Spirit is pictured as striving with men in their rebelliousness (Ge 6:3). Man is represented throughout the Bible as resisting those persuasive pressures to his own calamity, not occasionally but continually:

Ge 6:5 Ge 11-13 Is 65:2 Jer 11:7-8 Lk 19:14, 46 Mt 23:33  
Acts 7:51 Ro 2:4-5 1 Th 5:19

God purposes to fill men's lives with abundant blessings but is prevented by men's obstinacy. God is pictured as pleading with man in most pathetic words which evidence a most sincere concern for man's welfare:

Prov 1:24-25, 30 Jer 2:5, 9, 13 Jer 6:19 Jer 25:7 Eze 18:31-32  
Micah 6:2-3 Zech 1:4 Jn 1:11 Jn 5:40-42 Lk 19:41-42  
Mt 23:37 Re 3:20

Man has limited God's love (Ps 78:41).

4. The agonizing grief and disappointment that sin has brought to the loving Godhead proves conclusively that God has done everything possible to prevent sin from entering the world and from being perpetuated. God cannot be the author of His own unhappiness. This greatest sorrow will be developed later.

Man, therefore, was created perfect in every respect and started out on the pathway of life with proper balance and perspective. God did not create moral character in man as a fixed something. In the very nature of man's constitution this was impossible. Man alone could create moral character for himself by responding to his Creator's love and blessings. Moral character attaches itself only to the actions of the subject. Nothing could be done to guarantee man's continuing in a state of obedience. Man was an endowed personality throbbing with life and equipped to climb great moral heights and fall to great depths.



# 6

# Consequences of Rebellion

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## Consequences of Man's Sin and persistent rebellion against God's Mercy

- *"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known" (Dt 11:26-28).*
- *"God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS...For there is no partiality with God" (Ro 2:4-11).*
- *"The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Ge 6:6).*
- *"I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me" (Eze 6:9).*
- *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear" (Is 59:2).*
- *"...find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good" (Ro 7:21).*
- *"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (He 9:27).*
- *"So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Ro 14:12).*
- *"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Mt 25:46).*

All that God does is motivated by virtuous love and true benevolence. This disposition was the moving force in the creation of moral beings, because the Godhead were conscious of all the happy experiences and blessings of fellowship that such beings could have. They would have to be created in the Divine *image* and possess the endowments of personality. Their regulation would be unique by appeals made to their intelligence to choose their Creator's virtuous manner of life. As a benevolent moving force toward obedience, dreadful consequences

were solemnly declared to most certainly follow if man should revolt against his intelligence and all the kind manifestations of his Creator. God in love has declared that He will deal in absolute righteousness with every moral being before the entire universe. The dreadful possibility of man's revolt became a reality. God now has the solemn responsibility of fulfilling the promised consequences toward man as a dutiful Moral Governor, but not without deep experiences of personal agony and compassionate manifestations of mercy.

The dreadful and tragic consequences of man's sinful rebellion against the loving and reasonable moral government of God, and the ever-increasing resistance that mankind has shown towards God's overtures of mercies, are as follows.

## Agonizing Grief and Disappointment

First and foremost, agonizing grief and disappointment to the Members of the Godhead.

*"The Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands" (Acts 7:48).  
"For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (2 Chr 16:9).*

Man can "seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him", since God is "not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). "All things were created by him (the Lord Jesus Christ), and for him" wrote the Apostle Paul of the original creation (Col 1:16). God had planned to have great joy in man by virtue of his high moral endowments (Zeph 3:17). The Godhead experienced this joy for a period of time (Ge 3:8-11). Later on this inner Divine desire for possessive love is many times revealed (as Dt 7:6-13). The revolt of mankind and the persistent resistance of the great majority against these intimate plans has deeply affected the happiness of the Godhead and has brought unspeakable disappointment. A great many passages in the Bible open to us the secrets of the Divine bosom and convey to us the wonderful fact that the Godhead are just as tender-hearted as They are great. **Grief is always in proportion to intimacy and to depth of understanding in contemplating this intimacy. Who can really begin to fathom the sorrow of the Godhead? This tragedy was certainly not the will of God, God could not in any way be the cause of His own disappointment and grief.**

1. Sin had developed to such tragic proportions that God's grief of *heart* drove Him to repent or regret that man had been created (Ge 6:12, 5-7). As "God looked upon the earth" with the sole desire to bless men with Divine experiences of joy and blessing, the Holy Spirit now had to strive with men to restrain their concentrations upon sin (Ge 6:3). This resistance brings endless grief because of great love (Acts 7:51, Ep 4:30, 1 Th 5:19). If striving and wrath were of the nature of God, there would be no grief. Instead of a reign of love in men's hearts, Satan's "beachheads" (Ep 2:2) and those of "the flesh" or emotional supremacy (Ga 5:16-17) must be contended with, "God is a jealous God among you" (Dt 6:15), when formal allegiances with the enemy or with selfish perversions are made. When God must be "angry with the wicked every day" (Ps 7:11) because of love for righteousness, this is an endless intrusion into the Divine happiness.

2. God's grief and disappointment with the nation Israel has been most painful. God chose the idea of developing a nation with special privileges as a means of reaching the world (Ge 12:1-3) and of bringing about the advent and sufferings of the Saviour (Ga 4:4-5). In spite of untold miracles and loving manifestations, God was almost uniformly grieved with the great majority of the nation and had great disturbances of mind in bringing about necessary judgments:

Dt 5:29, 8:2, Ps 95:10 (quoted in He 3:7-10, 17, with solemn admonition), Ex 32:7-14, Nu 14:21-39, 2 Chr 36:14-21, Ps 78:37-42, 56-61, Jer 6:16-19, 11:6-8, 11, 25:3-9. Israel's rejection of God's direct rulership in demanding a king brought affectionate sorrow (1 Sam 8:5-9, 19-22, 10:17-19), more when Saul had to be dethroned (1 Sam 15:10-11, 22-23, 35). Isaiah likened Israel to God's vineyard, which God affectionately took care of with great resulting grief (1 Sam 5:1-7). To Ezekiel were given unspeakable words: "*I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me*" (Eze 6:9). "*Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel walked in my ways*" said God (Ps 81:13-14).

**Who shall measure God's grief and heartbreak over Israel?** See also:

Is 43:21-24   Is 48:16-19   Is 59:1-2   Is 63:7-10   Is 65:2-3

3. God's grief and unhappiness is demonstrated in God's reluctance to bring about righteous judgment for man's sin. The Bible very frequently testifies of the profound patience and longsuffering of God with rebellious mankind, as in: Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2, Micah 7:18-19, Ro 2:4, 1 Pe 3:20 (Ge 6:3), 2 Pe 3:19.

When God permitted nations to judge Israel for their sins, He was moved to send deliverance as soon as any evidence of repentance was manifested: Jud 2:16-18, 10:13-16, Ps 106:43-45. God was moved to change His mind while judgment was going on, without any evidence of repentance, 1 Chr 21:14-15. God offered to change His mind about certain planned judgments if man was willing to turn from sin: Jer 18:7-10, 26:2-7, 12-13, Hosea 11:8-9, Eze 33:11. Men may take advantage of God's mercy (Ecc 8:11), but God's compassion moves Him to restrain righteous wrath and send warnings of approaching judgment in the hope that men will turn from sin and be reconciled to His love.

4. It was certainly grievous to God, therefore, to bring about major changes in His whole program for man. It was certainly grievous to God to impose burdens upon man after the fall (Ge 3:16-19) in order to restrain sinful development by too much leisure. It was certainly grievous to drive out man from the beautiful garden and from "*the tree of life*", which must have sustained perfect health (Ge 3:24). It was certainly grievous to pronounce the judgment, "*unto dust shall thou return*" that unnatural tearing away of the soul and spirit from the body, called *death*. Later judgments must have caused a similar reaction as men "*did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, and God had to give "*them over to a reprobate mind*" (Ro 1:28). Above all, it must have been grievous for God to assign incorrigible men to a place of eternal confinement called "*hell*" (Mt 25:41, 46, Lk 13:28, Re 22:11) which was not brought into existence for man, where "*weeping and gnashing of teeth*" shall prevail.

5. The Lord Jesus during His earthly sojourn was *“a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”* (Is 53:3), thus manifesting the disposition of the entire Godhead (Jn 1:18). The word *declared* literally means to put God on exhibition. He wept and had great lamentations, *“loud crying and tears”* (He 5:7), as men rejected Him (Jn 1:11, 5:40, 42, Lk 19:14). The blessings which He carried in His bosom had to remain un-manifested and this broke the Saviour’s heart (Lk 19:41-42, Mt 23:37). While He entered our sphere of life *“that the world might be saved through Him”* (Jn 3:17), only a comparative *few* were responding (Lk 13:23-24). As the Lord viewed the awful destiny of remorse that most men were forging for themselves. His compassions and sympathies were taxed to the breaking point. These tender compassions manifested (as Mt 9:36) were also those of the Father (Jn 14:9). The goodness of God continues pleading with men with the greatest of concern (Is 55:1-3, Re 3:20, 22:17).

These many passages portray the great grief and unhappiness that man’s sin has brought to the *tender-hearted* God. They are revealed in the Bible as factual and not as imaginary adaptations to our way of thinking and acting. They should become the greatest force to move men to repentance by bringing men to feel sorry for God rather than for themselves, in which state repentance is impossible.

## Spiritual Death

Spiritual separation of man from God’s favour, or a state of spiritual death.

Ge 2:16-17   Ge 3:22-24   Ge 6:5   Is 59:1-2   Is 64:7   Ep 2:1, 5, 12-13, 18  
 Ep 4:18   1 Tim 5:6   1 Pe 5:5   Re 3:1

The basic idea of *death* is separation. Under this heading we consider the loss of the positive, the loss of that absolutely intimate experience of the Divine life for which man was created and endowed. In losing the Divine favour, man has lost the very essence of his intended life. This is why the Gospel comes forth with the blunt statement: *“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life”* (1 Jn 5:12). To be separated *“from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power”* (2 Th 1:9) is to be separated from that real and genuine life that God intended. The direct manifested presence and blessing of God in our minds and hearts in all the relationships and observations of life was meant to be an endless thrilling experience of Divine life. All this, man has sacrificed by his rebellion.

## Loss of Peace and Joy

Loss of peace and joy with a permanent distortion of the inner balance of personality by the experience of sin:

Is 48:22    Is 57:20-21    Is 64:6    Ps 51:2, 7-8, 10, 12    Jn 3:36    Ro 3:16-17  
 Ro 8:6    2 Co 7:1    Tit 1:15    2 Pe 2:20    1 Jn 3:20    1 Jn 5:12  
 Re 22:11

Man's personality is a complete unified entity, not a collection of isolated parts that can function independently. Everything we do proceeds from a decision of will, involves our intelligence and perception, leads to emotional reactions or experiences, is approved or disapproved by the conscience, and is registered in the memory in complete perspective. As long as we choose to be guided by truth as perceived in the intelligence, our emotional life experiences reactions which are approved by the conscience. This is a state of inner peace and tranquillity, with a satisfaction of joy that we are pleasing God and our fellow men. Sin is a voluntary state in which emotional gratification is made of supreme concern, with the intellect directed to think thoughts that will further certain selected areas of indulgence. Truth as interpreted by conscience proclaims guilt, bringing about an inner disturbance that can never be silenced by relentless effort. The will is intimidated into more and more bondage. The whole proceeding is a state of chaos with devastating consequences, contrary to our nature.

## Strained Relations with his Fellow Men

Strained relations with his fellow men, instead of free, happy friendship:

Ge 3:7    Ge 4:8    Ex 20:13-17    Mt 5:43-44    Ro 1:24-25, 28-32    Tit 3:3  
 Jas 4:1    1 Jn 2:11    1 Jn 3:15

All earthly relations involve communication through the five senses. As Previously discussed, we communicate our whole personalities in ways that we do not realize. Only honest and virtuous hearts can have relaxed friendship. Selfishness is antagonistic to friendship, since we are trying to get more than we deserve from others. Such selfish intentions will somehow be manifested and will bring strife and contention as they are exposed and demanded with increased intolerance. Happy relationships with our fellow men in selfishness is impossible.

## Physical Deterioration

Physical deterioration, pain, and finally death.

1. The body suffers deterioration, decay, and disintegration:

Ge 2:9, 16    Ge 3:22-24    Ge 3:19    Ecc 12:7    Ro 8:23    1 Co 15:53-54  
 2 Co 4:7, 16    2 Co 5:1    Re 21:4

When man was sent forth from "*the tree of life*" which he formerly was invited to "*freely eat*" his body apparently was no longer sustained in perfect health. The natural result was deterioration, disease, pain, and finally death.

2. Physical death is a tearing asunder of man's integrated personality plainly contrary to God's plan: Ge 2:7-9, 1 Co 15:26, 55-56.
3. The essential personality (spirit and soul) is separated from the body and departs to another realm. Ecc 12:7, Lk 16:19-23, 2 Co 5:6-9.

## Penalties of Sin

Penalties of sin in man's earthly life or environment.

1. Decay and death in the natural world: Ro 8:20-23, Ge 3:14, 9:2-3, Is 11:6-9.
2. Material creation and vegetation changed Ro 8:20-22 (Ge 1:31), Ge 3:17-19, (ground made less productive and difficult, antagonistic growth) Acts 3:21.
3. Man expelled from the Garden of Eden to have a life-long conflict with nature: Ge 3:17-19, 22-24.
4. Women to have sorrow, greater burdens, pain, and be in submission: Ge 3:16, Lk 2:34-35, Jn 19:25-27, 1 Co 11:3, Ep 5:22-24, 1 Pe 3:1-2.

## Depravity of Constitution

Depravity of constitution, or aggravated, ever-worsening tendencies to self-indulgence, introducing a new conflict with the forces of evil, with ourselves, and with our surroundings:

Ge 3:7, 22 (man now knew evil as well as good), 3:6, 15, Jn 8:44, Ep 6:10-18 (a Satanic *beachhead* had now been established within man's heart for endless spiritual warfare against "*the rulers of the darkness of this world*"), Ro 7:21, 24 (it now became easier to do evil than good), 1 Jn 2:15-17. Depravity relates to that state of constitution and faculties by which it is easier to sin or gratify ourselves than to do what our enlightened mind declares to be right and proper. The strongest tendency is toward certain kinds of indulgences which our constitution and environment has fostered and our wills have chosen to develop by persistent effort.

1. Our profound endowments by creation "*in the image of God*" makes this awful depravity possible. We have seen that God designed and created man so that his whole being shall react to everything he does. This God did expecting that man would use these marvellous endowments to climb to pinnacles of triumph. But these privileges also make possible an equal descent into an abyss of prostration. **Thoughts, experiences and actions become a part of us through our memories.** Each cycle of actions is added to what preceded, increasing evil influence and establishing habits. A guilty conscience becomes a barrier to change. Our bodies are affected by these excesses and greatly help toward continuation.

2. Our environment and relations, which were meant to be profound blessings, become the means toward greater degradation. Our relations to the earth and its sustaining forces imposes burdens and bodily limitations through toil. Intimate relationships which God intended for blessings have been grossly perverted. Material objects which were to be admired and appreciated have become centres of attachment which are hard to break away from.
3. Our weakened and unbalanced physical condition constitutes what we call physical depravity and contributes to the development of moral depravity. Physical depravity is not to be thought of as a loss of the ability of free will, but as introducing a bias or tendency toward self-gratifications, an obstacle which must be overcome by right moral action. The word *depravity* means very crooked from the Latin *pravus*, crooked, and *de*, intensive or very. Depravity of body is evidenced by the fact that there is no perfect health. Depravity extends to our minds because of a vital connection with the weaknesses of the body, thus limiting their powers. Depravity extends also to the emotions by way of sympathy for bodily ailments and nurture. Thus physical depravity by birth and circumstances is a reality, but is not the cause of wrong moral action.
4. Moral depravity, on the other hand, is always a voluntary depravity. It is a state or condition of our moral nature that is the result of what we have done. Moral depravity is a developed habit of life, a tendency to keep on doing what, we have been doing. Every wrong action deepens the ruts of our depravity until we develop mighty monsters of bondage, either amiable or degraded as men view things, that require ever-increasing energy of will to counteract. Evidently man is able to rise up to do battle with himself in turning away from his sin, for God commands "*all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30) and nowhere implies that he is unable to do so.
5. The universality of sin in the world is not to be accounted for, therefore, by some fixed causation in our personality inherited by birth, but by:
  - (a) Hereditary physical depravity and deficiencies of constitution exerting a tendency toward softness, self-pity, or self-nurture and opposing discipline.
  - (b) The cultivation of physical consciousness through the five senses prior to the dawn of moral accountability or evaluation.
  - (c) Moral influences of our immediate and social environment, establishing habits of life by observation and impulse.
  - (d) The resulting comparatively dim impact of moral enlightenment when it occurs, as we begin to perceive our moral relations and obligations.
  - (e) The determination of the will to press on in self-gratification already firmly established, against these new realizations. Here is where the habit of self-indulgence becomes sinful and now involves new concentrations in its pursuit, developing excuses to ease somewhat the disturbed conscience.

## Endless Misery and Torment

Endless misery and torment in woeful Separation from God and Holiness.

1. The nature of this punishment is described by the most solemn and agonizing words.

- (a) Eze 18:30-32, Ro 6:23 (**death**)
- (b) Mt 7:21-23, 2 Th 1:9-10 (**separation from God**)
- (c) Re 22:11 (**continued sinfulness**)
- (d) Mt 8:11-12, Jude 12-13 (**darkness**)
- (e) Mk 8:34-37, Jn 3:15-16 (**perish or lost**)
- (f) Mt 7:13-14 (**destruction or perdition**)
- (g) Jn 3:36 (**wrath of God**)
- (h) Mt 25:46, 2 Th 1:9, He 10:29, 2 Pe 2:9 (**punished or punishment**)
- (i) 1 Th 4:6 (**avenger**)
- (j) Re 6:10 (**avenge**)
- (k) 2 Th 1:8 (**vengeance**)
- (l) Lk 16:23, 28, Re 14:10-11 (**torment**)
- (m) Lk 16:24-25 (**tormented or in anguish**)
- (n) Ro 2:9 (**tribulation and anguish**)
- (o) Re 14:11 (**no rest**)
- (p) Mt 22:13 (**weeping or wailing and gnashing of teeth**)
- (q) Is 66:24, Mk 9:48 (**figuratively like fire and the gnawing of worms**)
- (r) Jn 5:28-29 (**a resurrection of judgment**)

2. Names applied to the abode of those not reconciled to God:

- (a) Lk 16:28 (**a place**)
- (b) Ps 9:17 (**Sheol**, an Old Testament word meaning the underworld, the region of the dead, used also of the saved as a temporary abode)
- (c) Lk 16:23 (**Hades**, a New Testament word with the same meaning, an intermediate state, not the final state of punishment)
- (d) 2 Pe 2:4 (**Tartarus**, understood as a supposed subterranean region, the underworld), Mt 5:29-30 (**Gehenna or hell**, a valley near Jerusalem where refuse was dumped and a constant fire kept, with its vermin, first used by the Lord Jesus to describe the place of eternal punishment)
- (e) Re 20:14-15 (**lake of fire**, the Lord Jesus gave the most awful descriptions of all)



3. It would appear that the various words and names used are intended to portray the awful intensity of remorse of conscience and conscious spiritual torment, and are not intended to represent actual physical conditions of the place of confinement:
- (a) Lk 12:49 (**fire** used figuratively)
  - (b) Mt 3:10, 12 (**tree** and *chaff* are figurative, so *fire* must be also)
  - (c) Mk 9:48, Mt 8:12, 24:51, Re 21:8 (if **fire** is literal, so must **worms**, *darkness*, *cut. . . asunder*, *lake of fire*, and **brimstone** be literal)
  - (d) Jn 5:28-29, Re 20:11-15 (**the resurrection bodies of the unjust appear to have similar immortal characteristics to those of the just, and would appear not to be subject to physical fire**)
  - (e) Lk 16:22-25 (**the rich man had no body to experience a literal flame, his memory was his tormentor**)
  - (f) Mt 25:41 (**Satan and his rebellious angels, for whom hell was created, are spiritual beings without physical bodies that could experience literal fire**)
4. The agonies of perdition will be in exact proportion to personal guilt, as openly declared in the judgment. God in perfect righteousness shall judge every man for his own sin according to the spiritual enlightenment that each one was favoured with, no hint or mention being made of the imputation of Adam's guilt:

Is 3:10-11	Jer 32:17-19	Eze 18:4, 20	Mt 11:20-24	Mt 12:36-37
Lk 12:47-48	Lk 20:46-47	Jn 5:27-29	Acts 17:30-31	Ro 2:2-11, 12, 16
Ro 14:10-12	1 Co 4:5	2 Co 5:10	Ga 6:7-8	1 Tim 5:24-25
He 9:27	1 Pe 1:17	Jude 14-15	Re 2:23	Re 20:12-13

We are emphatically told that in God's judicial rulership of moral beings, the guilt of one shall never be transferred or imputed to another.

Dt 24:16    2 Chr 25:4 (2 Kgs 14:6)    Ps 94:23    Jer 31:30    Eze 18: 4, 20

In the face of this positive assertion of pinnacle, a contradiction would exist in the Bible if any statement could be found declaring our guilt for Adam's sin.

The celebrated passage in Ro 5:12-19, which is often referred to as establishing the dogma of the literal imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, merely affirms that just as Adam's sin was the occasion, root cause, of the voluntary disobedience of all men, so Christ is the occasion, not cause, of the salvation offered to all men. The one is co-extensive with the other.

By **OCCASION** we mean an opportunity or "a condition of affairs that brings something about: especially, the immediate inciting circumstances as distinguished from the real or fundamental cause".

By **CAUSE** we mean that event or force which actually produces the results or the effect without any further action.

**CAUSE** is the reason for an action, **OCCASION** the opportunity or circumstances.

**Romans 5:12-19:**

<b>“The first man Adam”</b>	<b>“Christ the last Adam”</b>
“A living soul” (1 Co 15:45) An occasion, not cause, of our choice of sinful indulgence “ <b>The</b> many be dead” Ro 5:15 “Upon <b>all men</b> to condemnation” Ro 5:18 “ <b>The</b> many were made sinners” Ro 5:19	“A quickening spirit” An occasion, not cause, of our choice of salvation “Abounded unto <b>the</b> many” Ro 5:15 “Upon <b>all men</b> unto justification of life” Ro 5:18 “ <b>The</b> many be made righteous” Ro 5:19

If all men are guilty and under condemnation because of Adam’s sin, then all men will be saved because of Christ’s atonement, the one is just as extensive as the other. Under no law of linguistics can *all men* on one side refer to everyone and *all men* on the other side refer only to those who are actually saved. In addition, we have *the many* twice on each side, the definite article pointing out a distinct group, obviously all men. All men are strongly influenced by Adam’s sin, and that of subsequent generations, to follow his example and make choice of a life of selfishness or sin. Counteracting this, all men are strongly influenced because of the advent and atoning sufferings of the Saviour to make a choice to turn from sin and be reconciled back to a loving God.

- Ro 5:12 simply makes the statement that “*death did pass through unto all men because (or for the reason that) all did sin*”. The aorist tense, a climactic tense in the Greek, is used in both verbs, simply stating a fact that all men have committed sin and thus began to experience death or separation from God
- Ro 3:23 “*For all did sin and are (continually) coming short of the glory of God*” Here we have the same verb and aorist tense, stating a tragic fact
- Ro 3:12 “*All did turn aside from (the right way), together they were made useless (or did become depraved)*”. The similar verb *turn aside from* is again in an aorist tense, stating an all-inclusive fact

These similar verses narrate the tragic fact, therefore, that all men have followed Adam’s example and have chosen to live supremely selfish lives and thus are under guilt for their own sin.

##### 5. **The duration of this agonizing punishment is eternal or unending.**

The same words are used to assert this tragic fact as are used to declare the endless glory and existence of the Godhead and the endless happiness of those dying in a state of reconciliation to God through faith in the atoning death of Christ:

Dan 12:1-3 Mt 25:46 Mk 9:43, 47-48 Jn 5:28-29 Ro 16:27 Re 14:11  
 Re 22:5

Man’s ability and responsibility and, therefore, man’s guilt, is to be evaluated by viewing the dreadful consequences pronounced by a loving and just God. We are not to assume man’s inability and then try to justify the eternal consequences.

“*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*” (Ge 18:25)

# 7

## Reconciliation to God

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### Reconciliation to God and to our fellow men with its great problems

- *“We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Co 5:20).*
- *“For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in loving-kindness to all who call upon You” (Ps 86:5).*
- *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us” (Ep 2:4).*
- *“Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith: This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Ro 3:24-26).*
- *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).*
- *“Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Co 7:1).*
- *“And nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Re 21:27).*

The verb, to reconcile, conveys the idea of a change or an exchange, to change one thing for another, thus to cause one thing to cease and another to take its place; to reconcile those at variance, to adjust a difference, to restore to favour. The verb has a preposition, with a root meaning down, prefixed to it, evidently for emphasis of completeness or a revolutionary change in relationship.

The verb occurs in Ro 5:10-11, 1 Co 7:11 (referring to a wife), 2 Co 5:18, 19, 20, and the noun in Ro 5:11, 11:15, 2 Co 5:18, 19. We also have the verb with a double prepositional prefix, to reconcile completely away from: Ep 2:16, Col 1:20, 21.

## What is the object to be achieved in Man's reconciliation?

How complete must salvation be? Can a God of love and wisdom undertake a partial and inconclusive reconciliation? Knowing by self-consciousness the Divine capacity of bestowment and man's endowed capacity to be overwhelmed thereby, can God make plans for less than total capitulation and transformation of man's whole inner personality to do and experience His blessed will? Are there moral forces available to complete the conquest? If so, could a God of love withhold then? We answer an emphatic "no" and therefore:

1. The happy God-man relationship of love and kindness must be restored. Man was created, not to live in isolation, but to live his life in a most intimate relationship with his Creator and Benefactor (Col 1:16, Jn 1:3, Acts 17:28).

Man must be brought back into blessed fellowship... with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ in the fullness of joy (1 Jn 1:3-4). Man must be delivered from the abyss of sin and be "*translated into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Col 1:13). Man must once again have "*the love of God*" shed abroad in his heart (Ro 5:5). "*And the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him*" (1 Jn 4:16). "*We will come to him and make Our abode with him*" said the Lord Jesus of Himself and of the Father to those who will turn away from sin to love and obey Him (Jn 14:23).

2. The happy man-to-man relationship of love and kindness must also be restored. Man must be delivered from a state of being "*hateful and hating one another*" (Tit 3:3), if happiness is to prevail. "*But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness*" (1 Jn 2:11). Love to God and hate for one's fellow men can never coexist (1 Jn 4:20). If we are in a relationship of love to God, we will also be to our fellow men (1 Jn 5:1). One of the two summaries of the Ten Commandments given by our blessed Lord was: "*YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF*" (Mt 22:37-40). "*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you*" said the Saviour (Jn 15:12). Thus men must be brought to a state of loving one another or happiness is impossible (Ep 4:32).

## What is to be Achieved?

*By means* we understand *that through which, or by the help of which, an end is accomplished*. The end to be attained is a restoration of blessed fellowship with God and man, for which we were brought into being. Certain things must be brought to pass to make this end possible. Under this heading we view what must take place, rather than what the detailed problems are or how they are to be solved.

1. The guilt of past sin must be forgiven. The Lord Jesus said, "*But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment*" (Mt 12:36). "*God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus*" wrote Paul

(Ro 2:16). *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Ro 14:12). *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap”* (Ga 6:7). *“As it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment”* (He 9:27).

From these and many more passages from the Word of God, it is tragically evident that God as a meticulously righteous Ruler intends to bring absolute justice to every moral being in exact accordance with his moral choices and the moral light he possessed when such choices were made.

Since God as a Moral Governor can only deal with sins that have actually been committed, only past sins can be forgiven. The Scriptures say nothing about the forgiveness of future sins. Future sins must be dealt with as they occur. Every sin must bring condemnation and defilement, and call forth repentance, confession, forgiveness and cleansing, with a fresh recourse to the atoning death of Christ (1 Jn 1:19, 2:1-2). Forgiveness of past sins can never be merited by anything we do in the future, since we can do no more than fulfill our moral requirements (Dt 6:5, Mt 22:37-40). All forgiveness must be strictly all of grace.

2. The selfish purpose of life must be terminated. Man must be persuaded to renounce all conscious rebellion against God and all self-defence, and *“come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim 2:4). *“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish”*, said the Saviour (Lk 13:1, 5). Man has forsaken truth in his sinful rebellion, he has *“exchanged the truth of God for a lie”* (Ro 1:25). He is living in moral darkness and is refusing enlightenment (Jn 3:19-21). It is impossible to be reconciled to God unless one is willing to begin living a life that is agreeable and pleasing to God.
3. The inner defilement of sin must be remedied. The devastating consequences of sin, that have become a part of man's personality, must be healed so that a new blessed relationship with God and man might become a reality. There must be *“the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit”* (Tit 3:5).

Every sinful indulgence has added to our depravity and bondage which has permeated our entire personality. *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts. . . and defile the man”*, declared the Saviour (Mk 7:21-23). *“Fleshly lusts (or desires). . . war against the soul”* (1 Pe 2:11). Men are *“serving (or being a slave to) divers lusts (or desires) and pleasures”* (Tit 3:3), *“fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind”* (Ep 2:3). There is a *“filthiness of the flesh and spirit”* (2 Co 7:1). God has had to give man up to *“uncleanness”* (Ro 14). *“Their mind and conscience is defiled”* so that *“nothing (is) pure”* (Tit 1:15). Man's heart condemns him so that he cannot have *“confidence toward God”* (1 Jn 3:20-21). We need a great transaction of deliverance. Our hearts need to be *“sprinkled clean from an evil conscience”* (He 10:22), *“the flesh with its passions and desires”* (Ga 5:24), or *“our old man”* needs to be *“crucified”* in a spiritual union with Christ's death, *“in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin”* (Ro 6:6).

4. This transformed life must be sustained. There is a requirement that all those who are reconciled to God must *“continue in the faith, grounded and settled”* (Col 1:23). Man

must be induced and empowered to live in victory over sin in order that he may remain free from condemnation by forgiveness, for *"he that does the will of God abides for ever"* (1 Jn 2:17). As has been mentioned, the Scriptures say nothing about the present forgiveness of future sins nor the forgiveness of sins presently being indulged in. Many passages of the Bible most graphically affirm that every sin brings guilt and condemnation in the righteous government of God. *"For there is no partiality with God"* (Ro 2:11). The following will serve as examples:

Ex 32:30-33	1 Chr 28:9	Eze 18:24, 26	Eze 33:12-13	Mt 5:22
Mt 18:32-35	Jn 5:14	Acts 8:18-24	Ro 6:16	Ro 8:13
Ga 6:7-8	He 10:26-29	He 12:14-17	Jas 1:15 (12-16)	Jas 5:9
2 Pe 2:20-22	Re 22:18-19			

This is what our enlightened conscience affirms apart from Divine revelation. It is the view of common sense. It is this alarm over the dangerous consequences of every sin that brought forth the First Epistle of John *"that you sin not"* (1 Jn 2:1). The risen and ascended Saviour was needed as an advocate *"if any man sin"*. If God has not and cannot devise a way of salvation that provides freedom from condemnation, or a state of pardon, in the present commission of sin, then measures of reconciliation must be taken that will enable the Saviour to *"save his people from (or away from, implying separation, not in) their sins"* (Mt 1:21). In a real sense repentant sinners must become *"dead with Christ"* so that they may *"also live with him"* (Ro 6:8).

5. **Preparations for heaven can only be made in this life.** *"And nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it"* (Re 21:27). *"Behold, now is THE ACCEPTABLE TIME, behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"* (2 Co 6:2). The Lord Jesus solemnly declared, as the sufferings of the Cross were approaching: *"I go to prepare a place for you"* (Jn 14:2). Peace and love will characterize this *place*, the main feature being unending fellowship with the Godhead (Jn 14:3). Man must be restored to that happy state of *"perfect love"*, which *"casts out fear"*, to qualify him for such intimate happiness. This great transformation must take place in this life of probation and be in effect at the moment of death. Death introduces all, into one of two states, separated by *"a great gulf fixed"*, for *"it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (He 9:27). Sin is a matter of the heart and not the body (Mk 7:14-23), and thus death does not introduce any change in moral character. The means of reconciliation, therefore, must be such that rebellion is subdued, or this rebellion would introduce conflict into the serenity of heaven.

From these many considerations, it is overwhelmingly evident that the reconciliation that must be accomplished is not a technical proceeding taking place somewhere in the domain of God, independent of our vital consciousness, but one that demands entrance into the very *warp and woof* of human personality. Through great compassion and wisdom God must design and bring into effect a plan of reconciliation that will answer every problem and bring about a complete restoration of everyone who submits to be exercised thereby. God must in fact reconcile to Himself all who can be induced *"to flee from the wrath to come"* (Lk 3:7).

## Means of Reconciliation

### What are not the problems to be overcome by the means of reconciliation?

1. It's not that God the Father is personally unwilling to forgive sin without full vindictive satisfaction. Strictly speaking, to require full vindictive satisfaction for a wrong committed, is to be unwilling to forgive. The two concepts are opposites. To vindicate is to lay claim to, to assert a right to, to avenge, to recover by legal process. On the other hand, to forgive is to give up all claims against one on account of an injury, without any thought of compensation or retaliation. It is to remit or pardon freely all guilt charged against one for his conduct out of pure love to the one being pardoned. It is to abandon all resentment in a spirit of cheerful leniency and a restoration of the subject deserving displeasure to goodwill and friendship. The existence of a merciful disposition is the evidence of a mastery of all forces of selfishness, of all gratification of one's sense of justice as a personal feeling, and may exist without forgiveness actually taking place. Forgiveness awaits the solution of other problems and the fulfilment of certain conditions. True love cannot manifest itself if harm will come to the offender, or to the society of moral beings in which he holds relationship. (*See following supplementary page*).

It should thrill our minds to know that there is true, absolute, totally unselfish benevolence in the universe. We should highly treasure the Word of God, given and preserved by great personal sacrifice to God and man, which admits us into the very *throne room* of the Godhead and reveals to us the inner secrets of the Divine moral character. A voluntary disposition of mercy and forgiveness prevails equally among all the Members of the Godhead.

**Godhead are without personal vindictiveness.** There is no unwillingness or inner antagonism residing in the essential nature of the Godhead. The problems of forgiveness are not personal but governmental. The problems do not relate to God in isolation, but in His relations as Moral Governor. God does not require an exact payment for sin to satisfy retributive justice, but only requires that an atonement shall satisfy public justice and all the problems of a full and free reconciliation. "*God is love*" and has completely subdued all thought of retaliation toward rebellious sinners. The following is a brief selection from the many passages of Scripture that reveal this wonderful fact:

- (a) Old Testament descriptions of the forgiveness of sins:
  - i. Words for pardon, conveying the idea of a readiness to forgive or an easiness of exercising mercy: 2 Chr 7:14, Is 55:7, Ps 86:5, Neh 9:17.
  - ii. To blot out, wipe off, erase or abolish: Is 43:25, 44:22.
  - iii. To clear (the guilty): Ex 20:7.
  - iv. To be pleased with, to accept, hence to pardon: Is 40:2.
  - v. To bear, to bear any one's sin in forgiveness, to expiate by atonement: Ps 32:1 (forgiven), 5, Is 53:12 (bare).
  - vi. To forgive through an atonement, with the idea of cleansing away: Ex 30:10, Le 17:11 (atonement), Is 6:7 (purged).

- vii. *"Behind your back"* Is 38:17, *"remember... no more"* Jer 31:34, *"cast... into the depths of the sea"* Micah 7:19.
- (b) New Testament descriptions of the forgiveness of sins provide a more glorious portrayal of the overcoming love of God toward sinful men:
- i. The most common words for forgiveness or pardon, involving the idea of sending sins away from one's self or letting them go as if they had not been committed: Mt 6:12, 14, 15, 18:27, 32, and 1 Jn 1:9, Lk 24:47, Acts 26:18, Ep 1:7 and He 9:22.
  - ii. Common words involving the idea of loosing or loosing from, applied to the forgiveness of sins: Mt 18:18 and Re 1:5, Mt 18:27 and Lk 6:37.
  - iii. Words involving the idea of joy and gladness or cheerfulness in the bestowal of special favours or mercy, a most revealing description of the inner disposition of the Godhead:
    - To rejoice or to be glad: Lk 15:5,32.
    - Grace or graciousness, favour, good-will, loving-kindness, the idea of a kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved: Jn 1:14, Ep 2:5, 3:2, Tit 2:11.
    - To bestow grace, visit with favour: Ep 1:6 (*"has graced us in the beloved"*).
    - To forgive graciously or freely as a favour, to do something pleasant or agreeable to one: Ep 4:32, Col 2:13.
    - Free gift, or a gift freely and graciously given: Ro 6:23.
  - iv. Passing over or a letting pass beside: Ro 3:25 (the incompleteness of salvation before the actual accomplishment of the atonement of Christ).
  - v. To blot, to obliterate or erase: Acts 3:19.  
There are no evidences from any of these blessed passages that anything is required to render the Godhead mercifully disposed to grant free pardon to repentant sinners. We have words speaking of God sending away from Himself our sins, of God loosing us or setting us free from our sins, of God experiencing overwhelming joy and gladness at the thought of bestowing forgiveness and blessings upon man.
- (c) Old Testament words setting forth God's willingness to forgive, by ascribing:
- i. Holiness of character, for our veneration and imitation so must be free from all vindictiveness and retaliation: Le 11:44-45, Is 57:15.
  - ii. Love, which moves God to defer judgment and extend pardon: Jer 31:3.
  - iii. Goodness and kindness, an inner voluntary disposition: Ps 86:5.
  - iv. Graciousness, a willingness to stoop in kindness to an inferior: Neh 9:17.
  - v. Tender compassion, a God motivated by delicacy and affection: Ps 86:15.
  - vi. Mercy, the outflow of the tender spirit of compassion: Lam 3:22.
  - vii. Longsuffering, a slowness to anger or patience under provocation: Nah 1:3.
- (d) New Testament words setting forth God's willingness to forgive, by ascribing:



- i. Holiness of character, ascribed to the Triune Godhead for our veneration and imitation:  
Re 4:8 Acts 3:14 Jn 14:26 1 Jn 1:5, 7 1 Pe 1:16
  - ii. Love, or impartial good-will, the very essence of God's moral character:  
1 Jn 4:8 2 Co 13:11 Jn 3:35 Jn 14:31 Ep 2:4 Jn 13:34  
Ro 15:3
  - iii. Philanthropy, love to mankind, expressing God's fondness toward man: Tit 3:4.
  - iv. Goodness, moving God to bestow many blessings: Mt 7:11.
  - v. Good, in the sense of moral beauty, permeating all that God does: He 6:5 (*"the good word of God"*), Jn 10:11 (*"the good shepherd"*).
  - vi. Kindness, that moving delicacy of the inner Being of God which breaks down man's resistance: Lk 6:35, Ro 2:4.
  - vii. Grace, involving joy and gladness in manifesting mercy: Ro 3:24.
  - viii. Cheerfulness or graciousness in providing an atonement for sin: Lk 18:13.
  - ix. Compassion, an emotional yearning in the depths of Divine consciousness for man's salvation: Jas 5:11, Mt 9:36, Jn 14:9.
  - x. Pity, a mournful concern over man's tragic state: Ro 12:1 (1 Tim 2:4).
  - xi. Mercy, a fellow-feeling with the misery and woe of mankind: Ep 2:4.
  - xii. Sympathy, a sharing in our weakness: He 4:15.
  - xiii. Comfort, a calling to one's side to receive strength and blessing: 2 Co 1:3 (the Father), 1 Jn 2:1 (the Lord Jesus), Jn 14:16 (the Holy Spirit).
  - xiv. Patience, a toleration of injury or abuse in the hope that good can be bestowed: Ro 15:5.
  - xv. Forbearance, a holding back or delaying of punishment, with great self-control: Ro 2:4.
  - xvi. Longsuffering, a slowness to anger in avenging wrongs or injuries: 2 Pe 3:9, Ro 2:4.
2. It is not the extent of man's sin, or the total absence of merit, that the merciful disposition of the Godhead cannot overcome. If periods of selfish or sinful indulgence interrupted longer periods of love and virtue, or even if periods of love and virtue interrupted longer periods of selfishness and sin, then there would be less sin to deal with. There would be periods of moral attractiveness which would make it easier for God to deal with the disagreeable periods. There would be some assets which would help God to deal with the liabilities. But since it is the sad revelation of Scripture that men's selfish choices are continually persisted in without interruptions or suspension, prior to repentance (Ps 14:1, 3, Ro 3:12, Is 64:6, Ro 3:23, 5:8), our evaluation of the prevalence of love and mercy in the Divine Being must be elevated to a higher level of appreciation and worship.
  3. It is not man's refusal to seek God in humility for reconciliation, nor to respond in any sizable numbers to the tender appeals of the Holy Spirit and Gospel, that is an insurmountable barrier for the Godhead to exercise. If rebellious mankind had been

willing to seek the face of God in true penitence for reconciliation to his great Creator and Benefactor, or even if masses of men had responded to God's overtures of mercy, this would have made it easier for the Godhead to exercise Their great compassion in forgiveness and be induced to longsuffering. But Scripture reveals the sad fact that man never has and is not now seeking after God to be restored to Divine favour (Ge 6:5, Ps 53:2, 4, Is 64:7, Mt 23:37, Ro 3:11), and that comparatively few are responding to the great love and mercy which have been manifested (Is 30:11, 53:1, Lk 13:23-24). Yet the kindness and mercy of God persists on with great longsuffering, gently rapping at man's heart door and seeking admission (Re 3:20). Our esteem of the Divine love and mercy must climb still higher in view of these facts.

4. It is not that man is unable to repent or respond to God's mercy that requires any special means of reconciliation. Some have totally denied man's ability to repent or respond to the persuasive grace of God. Others have denied that man possesses any such ability but add that God graciously provides man with enabling power. Scripture speaks of the will or heart as the source of all moral actions (Prov 4:23, Mk 7:21, He 4:12). Scripture addresses man as possessing the ability and responsibility of self-decision (Dt 11:26-28, 30:15-20, Ro 6:16-18, 1 Jn 2:17, Re 22:17). Scripture commands "*all men everywhere to repent*" and nowhere implies that he is unable to do so (Is 55:7, Eze 18:30-32, Lk 13:3, 5, Acts 17:30-31, 20:21, 24). Although, as we shall see, man's unwillingness to repent and be conquered by the loving mercy of God is a monumental problem, his natural ability is not for he painfully possesses this.

We are happy, therefore, to be able to conclude, with the profoundest reverence and worship, that a voluntary disposition of mercy and forgiveness does prevail equally among all the Members of the Godhead. We must look elsewhere than the inner disposition of God in our search for the reasons why profound measures of atonement have had to be taken so that sinners might be moved to repentance and might be forgiven and reconciled to the loving heart of God.

## Problems to be overcome

### What are the problems to be overcome by the means of reconciliation?

They appear to be fourfold:

- **GOVERNMENTAL**, or the sin prevention problem in the exercise of mercy.
- **PERSONAL**, or the God-ignorance and confidence problem.
- **PREPARATORY**, or the hypocrisy-pride problem, and,
- **TRANSFORMATIVE**, or the defilement and renewal problem.

The atonement of Christ was not made for God alone, nor was it made for man alone, but to answer the problems in restoring a ruptured God-man relationship in all that is involved.

God and man must be viewed together in an intimate relationship if we are to comprehend the problems of reconciliation. The problem was not with God as an offended party requiring vindictive satisfaction, but with God as a loving Moral Governor who purposes to do justice to all His subjects. The Bible very frequently asserts the righteousness of God. God will treat all moral beings with perfect rightness (Ex 9:27, Dt 32:4, Ezra 9:15, Ps 25:8, Dan 9:14, Hosea 14:9, Jn 17:25, Ro 14:17). God is said to be *“faithful and just (or righteous)”* in the forgiveness of sins (1 Jn 1:9). In one of the most important passages summarizing the necessity of the atonement of Christ in the forgiveness of sins, *“freely by his grace”* (Ro 3:24-26), it is twice said that it was *“to declare his righteousness”*. The word rendered *to declare* signifies a manifestation, demonstration, public declaration, showing forth, or proof. It is God’s righteous method in the administration of forgiveness that is set forth, *“in order that he might be (continually) righteous (just or such as he ought to be) and be (continually) declaring righteous the (one) out of faith of Jesus”*.

1. **God must be just to HIS MORAL GOVERNMENT.** In providing such an effective deterrent to sin, that the enforcement of moral government shall not in any way be weakened when free pardon is extended to the guilty under certain conditions.

The most difficult problem any government is required to face is how to deal with its criminals. **The primary purpose of punishment is not to reform the offender, but the protection of society in the prevention of crime.** It is impossible in any human government to exercise a perfect rule over its subjects. Justice and mercy cannot both be manifested at the same time. When a ruler leans too far in the direction of justice, mercy suffers in his own heart and in the hearts of the people. When pardon is exercised on the guilty, justice suffers and crime increases. God’s problem in dealing with sinners in His moral government is exactly the same. Although God is ready to forgive and sinners are in such thorough repentance that it is safe to forgive, yet the great problem of doing this in perfect accord with His righteousness confronts Him. Something must be substituted for the punishment of sinners that at least equally well, will uphold the moral government of God, so that its authority shall not be weakened in any way by the free pardon of penitent sinners.

- (a) Man was designed and created to regulate himself by free choice under a moral government. Man was given the ability to understand what is right and what is wrong conduct. God as the Moral Governor is continually active in enlightening man and seeking to persuade him to act aright. God’s requirements for man are according to truth or are absolutely reasonable, so man can have no logical reasons for refusing God’s loving will. But man was endowed with the ability to act contrary to his enlightened reason and manufacture for himself false reasons to cover up his obstinacy. Man could be appealed to but not directly controlled:

Ge 1:26-27    Ge 2:16-17    Dt 30:19    Josh 24:15    Is 1:19-20    Jer 21:8  
 Jn 5:40        Jn 7:17        Ro 6:16-18    Re 3:20

- (b) The incentive to or enforcement of right choices is to be achieved by pronounced consequences, without any favouritism. As we have seen, man was to be rewarded

for obedience and punished for disobedience. The idea of consequences or sanctions, then, is the only method of enforcing moral government:

Dt 7:9-11 Dt 11:26-28 Dt 30:15-18 Is 3:10-11 Jer 18:8 Ro 2:6-11  
Ga 6:7-8

Punishment is a public declaration of the fact that disobedience and rebellion against God will not be tolerated, and thus becomes a barrier to all who are considering the ways of lawlessness and noncompliance. If anything were done in God's moral government that would give any proof that the great Righteous Governor was becoming lenient in His pronouncements, forces that hold back the free indulgence of sin would immediately collapse and sin would become rampant.

- (c) Whenever sin is forgiven, its consequences are eliminated, thus weakening the enforcement of moral government. Every pardoned criminal goes forth to proclaim to the world that crime may be indulged in without suffering the penalty that has been pronounced. This possibility of escape lets down the barrier to others, who are thereby weakened in their moral stand. This impossibility in human government to exercise both justice and mercy at the same time is aptly illustrated in the instance of Darius, king of the Medes and the Persians, who was faced with Daniel's refusal to conform to his worshipful demands. Daniel had to be thrown into the den of lions because there was found no substitutionary measure to uphold the public welfare if an exception had been made in Daniel's case in his pardon, which the king desperately desired (Dan 5:31-6:23). The strength of their government was that laws were not compromised (Dan 6:12).

God has declared: *"Every man shall be put to death for his own sin"* (Dt 24:16). *"The soul that sins, it shall die"* (Eze 18:20). Can God now reverse His declaration and say, *"the soul that sins it shall live"* without dire consequences to His government and misrepresentations of His own moral character? God cannot oscillate between justice and mercy as human rulers do. If His moral government will be in the least weakened by His overtures of mercy, He cannot under any circumstance be merciful. If one moral being shall stumble from the path of obedience or one sinner lose his restraint which limits his indulgence, the loving and righteous God cannot extend the mercy which fills His benevolent heart. Some profound governmental measure is required.

2. **God must be just to HIMSELF AS MORAL GOVERNOR.** In revealing the unspeakable grief and extreme displeasure that the Godhead have experienced because of man's rebellion against a loving rulership and his energetic persistence in sin.

To be saved is to *"come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4). The Lord Jesus came to introduce *"grace and truth"* in a fuller measure (Jn 1:17). *"The truth shall make you free"*, He declared (Jn 8:32). Salvation apart from a realization of the true situation as it exists is an impossibility. Reconciliation involves God and man. It is a personal transaction in the consciousness of both. There must be a person-to-person knowledge of each other. God must know man, which He does (Jn 2:25, He 4:13). God needs no further enlightenment. But man does not know God and thus could not be reconciled to God in intelligence without a great revolution in his concepts. Man must experience

a realization as to how sin has affected God if he is to know God in truth. Man thinks that because God has been longsuffering and patient in judging sinners, that He does not hate sin very much and has not been very much disturbed by it. This misunderstanding would be multiplied in the free pardon of sinners. Something must be done, therefore, to manifest the grief of the Godhead over sin, the unchangeable and unalterable intense hatred that God constantly experiences over sin, and the righteous wrath that arises in the Divine Being over man's continued rebellion.

3. **God must be just to MAN'S HYPOCRISY.** In destroying all pride and bringing man to recognize the truth of his moral relations and the profound guilt of his sin as deserving of eternal punishment.

God proposes to bless man with abundant visitations of mercy in salvation. A definite law of life was expressed by the Apostle Paul in the words:

*"Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies"* (1 Co 8:1). If God would increase the knowledge of an un-humbled intellect by revelation of Himself and His truth, He would be contributing toward a greater distortion of such a one's opinion of himself. Or, God would be helping such a sinner to become a still greater sinner. God spoke to the prophet Isaiah of old: *"But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word"* (Is 66:2). The Psalmist David wrote *"For though the LORD is exalted, yet He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar"* (Ps 138:6). To Peter it was revealed: *"clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE"* (1 Pe 5:5), (also to James (Jas 4:6). Repentance is a thorough willingness to forsake all conscious rebellion and seek the face of God for reconciliation. In view of the completely distorted concept of himself that man has developed (**as set forth under The Message, W-Me-1**), some great moral force will be necessary to awaken man to a realization of his true character.

4. **God must be just to MAN'S MORAL FREEDOM,** in providing a means to be used by the Holy Spirit in purifying the innermost being of the repentant sinner and in inducing him to live a new spiritual life through faith.

Man cannot be regenerated or controlled by sheer force or by Divine omnipotence, nor by some implanted instinct, but only by the application of appropriate means. In the present *"Era of the grace of God"* the Triune Godhead propose to transform completely the inner personality of the repentant sinners: Jn 1:13, 3:3-8, 2 Co 5:17, Ep 2:10, 4:24, He 12:10. This spiritual birth is to introduce us into a new consciousness of the life of God. This great change is a moral change in which the subject himself has an active part. It is not a simple act of God's power without man's agency. Therefore, some means must be brought into existence that both God and man can use in this complete inner renovation of personality. Then again, this transformed life must be sustained and thus there must be a new living spiritual force for daily life.

## Nature of the Means of Reconciliation

### What must be the characteristics or nature of the means of reconciliation?

God the Father desires man to receive the greatest possible manifestation of His love (Ro 8:32). There appears to be certain requirements that have to be met if these glorious mercies and privileges were to be bestowed upon man:

1. The means of reconciliation must consist of a series of unlovely events, filled with the awe of great grief. If something is to be substituted for the eternal punishment of sinners, it must have the same sobering effect upon the subjects partaking and upon the moral universe as the literal execution of the pronounced penalty for sin would have. Lovely and inspiring events cannot be substituted for unlovely and humiliating events. Like must be substituted for like. Sin is an exceedingly unlovely and tragic event, thus its antidote must likewise be.
2. This series of unlovely events must be of great dignity and distinction. The position and prominence of the sufferer determines the extent of its influence. The suffering of a king creates more sympathy and concern than the sufferings of a peasant. The substituted measures of reconciliation represent the dealings of God with man and thus must have a Divine dignity and moral excellence. A great tragedy requires great and forceful events as their counterpart.
3. This series of unlovely events must be within the area of man's direct consciousness and understanding, for it is man who must be everlastingly impressed. There must be world-wide realization and knowledge of what has been done, because the news that sin was being forgiven and thus that some were escaping the threatened punishment due them would be devastating to existing moral forces.
4. This series of unlovely events must be of universal application, for God "*is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance*" (2 Pe 3:9). Again, it is affirmed that God "*will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim 2:1). Further, as Peter perceived, "*God is not one to show partiality*" (Acts 10:34). Thus whatever God makes possible, He will make equally possible for all men.
5. This series of unlovely events must be marked by simplicity of application. Men of all states of intellectual attainment must be able to comprehend enough of the substituted measures to appropriate them.

## **Moral Influences Of Old Testament Sacrifices**

### **SIN A DREADFULLY SERIOUS MATTER AGAINST GOD**

Sin can be forgiven and its penalty waived only through a costly and awe-inspiring act of suffering of a substitute, which was only a type of the great coming suffering of the loving Saviour (Le 17:11, He 9:22, 10:4).

### **SIN AN OFFENCE TO GOD'S SENSE OF VALUES**

The dreadful measures that have had to be taken in reconciliation show that God must have an unchanging hatred of all sin and a strong sense of righteousness. All rebellion must be terminated if favour and friendship is to be restored through forgiveness and transformation (Lk 13:3, 5, Acts 17:30).

### **REALIZATION AND TRUE HUMILIATION NECESSARY**

God insists not only upon repentance for all sin, but also upon realization and true humiliation for sin. The repentant sinner needs to be exposed to strong moral forces to bring about this experience of guilt. To say he repents is not enough. He must be brought to the climax of repentance through the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the broken-hearted love of God manifested in the advent and sufferings of the Lord Jesus (Ro 5:8, 2:4), which was then prophesied as the great plan of redemption (1 Pe 1:10-12).

### **OFFERINGS WERE A TANGIBLE OBJECT FOR FAITH**

These solemn sacrifices provided something tangible for man to commit himself to in faith for forgiveness and cleansing from his sins, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It was continually stressed that through the prescribed sacrifices only could the guilt and devastations of sin be healed (Le 16:29-30).

### **GOD HAS A RIGHT TO FULL SUPREMACY AND DEVOTION**

God as our Creator and Benefactor has an absolute right to full supremacy in our lives and our loving devotion. This was stressed in the burnt offerings where the entire sacrifice was to be consumed upon the altar (Le 1:17b, 1 Sam 7:8-10, Ps 51:17-19).

### **GOD DELIGHTS IN PEACEFUL FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION**

Those in happy submission to God are invited to partake of peaceful fellowship and communion with God and with one another. This was the main idea in the peace offerings, where the offerer and his family were permitted to feast on most of the flesh of the offering (Le 7:15-17). Peace offerings always followed the other offerings and were used on special occasions of thanksgiving, like the giving of the Law (Ex 24:5), the Feast of Pentecost (Le 23:19), and on special occasions (Nu 10:10). A happy spirit of love and devotion was to prevail (Le 22:29-33).

### **TITHES AND OFFERINGS TO GOD A PRIVILEGED OBLIGATION**

Meat or meal and drink offerings, a bloodless offering of fine flour with oil and frankincense, and the drink offering of wine, ordinarily accompanied the animal sacrifices. They suggested the idea of tithes for the bounties of God: *"Flour, as the main support of life; oil, the symbol*

*of riches; wine, as the symbol of vigour and refreshment". Great joy can come only through personal sacrifice of our lives to God and to our fellow men (1 Chr 29:9-22).*

### **THE MORAL IMPACT OF THE FULFILMENT CANNOT BE LESS THAN THE TYPE**

*"He takes away the first in order to establish the second. . . but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD" (He 10:9, 12). Surely, when the sacred life and agonizing sufferings of our loving Saviour are proclaimed in the power of "the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven" (1 Pe 1:12), saving faith will "not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Co 2:5). To all who have allowed themselves so to be exposed, salvation becomes "the power of God" (1 Co 1:18), makes one "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Ro 1:16), and prepares him for the unending ovations of heaven (Re 5:9-13).*

### **HOW IS THE GUILT OF SIN REMOVED IN SALVATION?**

The guilt of sin registered in the great mind of God extends to *"every idle (non-working, useless, or careless) word"*, said the Saviour, for which all *"shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment"* (Mt 12:36). Since *"and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it"* (Re 21:27), some way must be found to free man of his guilt if salvation is to take place.

### **THESE ARE THE PROBLEMS OF RECONCILIATION:**

- **INTERNAL OR PERSONAL** in the essential nature of God, in that God insists upon absolute satisfaction of His vindictive reactions against every sin of man if salvation is to be granted? Or,
- **EXTERNAL OR GOVERNMENTAL** in God's relations to man as a righteous Moral Governor, and thus requires a righteous solution to the ruptured moral relationship that man's rebellion has brought about?

### **Upon repentance and faith, IS THE GUILT OF SIN REMOVED BY:**

#### **1. FORGIVENESS, PARDON, OR REMISSION OF PAST SINS? Which is:**

- (a) A giving up or relaxation of all claims on account of an injury.
- (b) An abandonment of all personal vindictive justices, all forms of personal retribution or retaliation for wrongs committed.
- (c) A spirit of leniency or mercy that diligently seeks a solution to the guilt problem.
- (d) A benevolent kindness extended toward penitent sinners,

Or by:

#### **2. STRICT JUDICIAL JUSTIFICATION, OR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ABSOLUTE JUSTICE?**



Which demands the execution of the full penalty of every transgression, the discharge of guilt only by the full punishment of a substitute in every detail. Provides no lessening of punishment in the moral world, the same sum total. Insists upon absolute retaliation or vindictive satisfaction through a literal transfer of every iota of guilt to a substitute.

Demands that an absolutely virtuous standing be provided through a literal imputation of the moral character of the substitute, separate from state.

All of which must have been done before the sinful acts were done, in those being saved since the Cross, thus introducing grave complications, and requiring that such an atonement be made only for those who shall actually be saved in the course of time, a general atonement would save everyone.

### 3. **STRICT JUDICIAL JUSTIFICATION IS IMPOSSIBLE:**

TOTAL DEBT TO BE PAID would equal:

Total quantity of guilt  $\times$  eternal or infinite duration, or the sum total of all the sinful actions of all those involved in the payment  $\times$  the eternal or infinite duration of punishment pronounced against sin.

If A owes B \$100, and C pays B \$100 in behalf of A, then A owes B nothing.

### 4. **DURATION OF SUFFERING IN THE ATONEMENT NOT INFINITE IN TIME:**

Our blessed Lord took upon Himself a voluntary suffering by giving Himself, which cannot be thought of in terms of quantity (Jn 6:51, 10:17-18).

While our blessed Lord bore "*the sin of the world*" during His lifetime (Jn 1:29), the climax of suffering on the Cross crushed out His holy heart unto death after a brief duration of time, the Saviour did not die of the crucifixion.

In no sense could this be the equivalent of an eternal duration of time.

Some have said that there is an infinity in the equation of suffering because of Christ's infinite Deity, or that Infinite Quantity  $\times$  limited time specific quantity  $\times$  infinite duration. But our blessed Lord suffered and died in His humanity, not in His Deity (Ga 4:4-6, He 2:9, 10:5, 10).

### 5. **THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SAVIOUR WERE SUBSTITUTED SUFFERINGS NOT AN EXACT EQUIVALENT:**

The atonement of Christ was a profound measure that would solve all the problems of reconciliation, so that God "*might be just* (to all His obligations as a righteous Moral Governor) *and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" (Ro 3:26). Thus *Justification* is an explanation of the Divine mode of forgiveness through the Atonement, *forgiveness* being far more common (as Lk 24:47, Ep 1:7, Col 1:14)



## Redemption through the advent and atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ

- *“The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10).*
- *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” (2 Co 5:19).*
- *“Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God” (1 Pe 3:18).*
- *“We do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone” (He 2:9).*
- *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace (Ep 1:7).*
- *“Our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Tit 2:13-14).*

We have discovered from the previous consideration what is doubtless the most surprising revelation of the Bible. After man's rebellion and persistence therein, such is the love and longsuffering of the Godhead that, They are free from all vindictiveness and are kindly disposed toward man. There is a willingness to forgive rather than an insistence upon vindictive satisfaction, a spirit of cheerful leniency rather than one of calculating rigidity, a spirit of self-denial rather than one of self-assertiveness, a disposition of mercy and pardon rather than one of revenge, a giving up of all retribution and retaliation rather than an absolute insistence upon it, a subduing of all personal righteous wrath rather than a full execution of it, a bypassing of personal justice rather than a demanding of punishment, a giving up of all claims of personal injury rather than a refusal to put aside the least claim, a cancellation of all legal claims rather than a prosecution of them, a willingness to forget personal injury rather than a concentration of wind upon what is due, an abandonment of all feeling of resentment rather than being ruled by a desire to avenge for all wrongs, a having only objective problems to be solved in man's salvation rather than having subjective problems to be gratified, a having only external problems of relationship to man as a righteous Moral Governor rather than internal problems to satisfy a vindictive disposition. God is willing to forgive man's sin *“freely by his grace”*,

without any need for personal vindictive satisfaction, when this can be done consistent with all His righteous obligations as Moral Governor.

The problems of reconciliation were temporarily overcome under the Old Covenant in Old Testament times through a sacrificial offering system which God had progressively revealed. Sacrificial offerings had been practised since the days of Adam and Eve. The full development of the sacrificial system of mercy and worship along with the Tabernacle and later the Temple with their sacred arrangements, were given through Moses. These furnished a tangible object for the exercise of faith and foreshadowed the final solution through the blessed atonement of Christ. The prescribed offerings may be classified in a twofold way, according to their main purpose or design:

- **First**, those offerings which were propitiatory, or for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness of sin and restoration to God. Sin offering is a designation which usually referred to the more general offerings that were to atone for the sins of one's life, rather than for specific sins. The most solemn great Day of Atonement was to be observed once each year by the whole nation of Israel (Le 16:1-34).

It was to be a time of great mourning for sin (Le 16:31), with repentance, confession, forgiveness and cleansing. Trespass offerings were offerings for specific guilt or blame which any one incurs, having in view mainly the injury done by sin, thus a ransom for a special wrong:

Le 5:5-6, 7    Le 5:15-16    Le 5:17-19    Le 6:6-7    Le 7:1-2, 37  
Le 19:21-22    Is 53:10

- **Secondly**, those offerings which expressed communion and fellowship with God, where the covenant relation was undisturbed: Burnt offerings, typical of entire consecration to God (Le 1:3, 10, 14), peace offerings, a sacrifice of peace or a feast of communion (Le 7:11-15, 16-17), and meat or meal and drink offerings, suggesting the idea of tithes for the bounties of God (Le 2:1-16). These sacrificial offerings were designed to make a profound impression upon each individual participating and upon the whole nation Israel.

It appears from Ro 3:25, that there was an incompleteness of salvation in Old Testament times so that God passed over sins as far as public satisfaction was concerned, looking forward to the full solution of the problems of reconciliation by the advent and atonement of Christ. *"...for the law made nothing perfect, and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God"* (He 7:19). *"For the law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. . . For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"* (He 10:1, 4). The problems of reconciliation were finally and completely overcome by the advent and atoning death of the Lord Jesus, the New Covenant or the Gospel.

## The Advent and Life of The Lord Jesus

### How did the advent and life of the Lord Jesus manifest the Godhead and how was the Atonement accomplished?

The Lord Jesus was born into our race without a human father and was Divinely announced after having been prophesied, taught with Divine wisdom and power, backed up by miracles, made continuous moral choice of obedience to His mission amidst endless temptations and struggles, was kept by the power of God during His lifetime and protected from a violent death, suffered alone unto death on the Cross for the sins of the whole world, with the Father and the Holy Spirit in necessary sympathetic withdrawal, was gloriously raised from the dead after a brief burial, and ascended into heaven, evermore to live as redeemed man's High Priest and as Judge of the ungodly.

1. No mediocre opinion is possible toward Jesus Christ: Jn 8:23, 24, 58, 1:1.
2. His advent and sufferings were determined upon from the fall of man and long prophesied: Re 13:8, Is 7:14, 52:13 to 53:12, 53:6.
3. He was born without a human father and was Divinely announced:  
Lk 1:35 Mt 1:18-20, 21 Mal 3:1 Mt 3:2-3, 6, 11 Jn 3:30 Mt 3:16-17
4. His teaching was endued with Divine wisdom and power, backed up by miracles:  
Lk 2:47 Jn 7:46 Mt 9:33 Jn 2:25 Lk 4:32, 14, 18-19, 28-30  
Mt 5:20 Mt 7:28-29 Mt 8:16-17 Mt 14:16-21 Mt 8:26-27  
Acts 10:38 Lk 6:12 Mk 3:13-15 Jn 13:1
5. He made continuous moral choice of obedience to His mission:  
Lk 2:49 Mt 20:28 He 10:7 Jn 4:34 Jn 5:30 Jn 6:38  
Jn 8:29 Jn 10:17-18 Jn 12:23, 27-28 Phil 2:8 He 5:8-9
6. His temptation and struggles prepared Him for saviourhood and priesthood:  
Ga 4:4-5 Ep 6:11-19 Mt 4:1, 4 Jn 8:46 2 Co 5:21 He 7:26-27  
He 12:3 1 Pe 2:22 1 Jn 3:5 Jn 16:33 Re 3:21 He 2:17-18  
He 4:15
7. Prophecies of His coming as a saviour included His rejection and brutal treatment:  
Ge 3:15 Ps 118:22 (Lk 20:17-18) Is 8:14-15  
50:5-7 (Mt 26:67, 27:30) Is 53:2-3, 7-8, 12 (Lk 22:37) Jn 8:12  
Jn 7:7
8. He was kept by the power of God during His lifetime:  
Jas 4:4 Lk 4:30 Jn 7:30, 44 Jn 8:20, 59 Jn 10:30-33 Jn 18:6

9. Our Lord prophesied His rejection and crucifixion: Mt 16:21-23, Lk 9:44, 22:53.
10. Our Lord fervently prayed that men's violence toward Him would not frustrate the accomplishment of the Atonement:  
 Mk 14:34-36 Lk 22:44 Mk 14:41 He 5:7 Is 50:7 Lk 2:49  
 Mt 16:21-23 Mt 20:28 Jn 18:3
11. God the Father exerted a mental preference in the minds of the rebellious multitude so that their hatred was manifested by crucifixion (the Roman method of capital punishment) instead of by stoning (the Jewish method): Jn 18:31-32, 19:6, Acts 3:18, 4:27-28, 5:30. This made possible a death from spiritual causes.
12. Christ suffered unto death alone for the sins of the whole world:  
 Is 53:6 Jn 1:29 Jn 6:51 Jn 10:15, 17-18, 38 Ga 1:3-4 Ga 2:20  
 Tit 2:14 1 Pe 2:24 He 7:26-27 He 9:14 Is 53:12 Mt 27:46  
 2 Co 5:21 Lk 23:46 Mk 15:39
13. The Lord Jesus died from a broken heart over the world's sin and not from the crucifixion:  
 Jn 19:30, 32-35 Mk 15:43-45 Jn 10:18 Jn 15:13 Lk 22:19-20 He 2:9  
 1 Pe 2:22, 24
14. God the Father was loving and not vindictive:  
 Lk 4:12 Jn 1:1 Jn 1:18 Jn 5:17-18 Jn 10:30 Jn 10:33  
 Jn 20:28 1 Co 8:6 Col 2:9 Tit 2:13 He 1:8 2 Pe 1:1
15. Christ was gloriously raised from the dead, evermore to live as High Priest to those who have submitted to Him:  
 Ro 4:25 Mt 28:6 1 Co 15:6 Phil 2:9-11 He 7:24-25 Hen 4:14-16
16. The risen and glorified Christ shall be the Judge of all men:  
 Mt 25:32 Jn 5:22-23, 27, 30 Acts 10:42 Acts 17:31 Ro 2:16 Ro 14:10  
 1 Co 4:5 2 Co 5:10 2 Tim 4:1 1 Pe 4:5 Re 19:11

## Was Christ's Atonement Sufficient?

The majestic life and glorious atonement of the Lord Jesus more than fulfilled all the necessary characteristics that were required to solve the great problems in man's full reconciliation.

### 1. Christ's death was an exceedingly unlovely and awesome event:

- (a) The Old Testament sacrificial system prefigured and prepared men's minds for this increased manifestation of tragedy: Le 17:11, He 9:18-22, 10:3-4, 9:11-14.



5. **The simple and understandable conditions of salvation (repentance, faith and continuation in the faith) are within the reach of all:**

Lk 10:21	Jn 1:12-13	Jn 5:40	Jn 7:17
1 Co 2:4-5 (simplicity)	Mk 1:14-15	Lk 13:3, 5	Lk 24:47
Jn 5:24	Acts 17:30	Acts 20:21	Acts 24-25
Ep 2:8 (repentance and faith)	Ro 11:20-22	1 Co 15:1-2	Col 1:21-23
He 3:12-15	Re 2:10-11	Re 3:3-5 (continuation)	

## Did it Satisfy the Problems of Reconciliation?

### Did the atonement of Christ satisfy the problems of reconciliation?

The Lord Jesus by His life and sufferings “*for the sins of the whole world*” accomplished the following:

1. Rendered satisfaction to public justice, as distinguished from retributive or vindictive justice, thus removing the governmental barrier to the free pardon of repentant sinners. **The GOVERNMENTAL or the sin-prevention problem.**

The advent and sufferings of Christ has provided a moral force of far greater proportions to confront the minds of moral beings as they contemplate sin, than the threatened eternal punishment of sinners had provided:

- (a) The great mass of unrepentant sinners have a public testimony of the awfulness of the Moral Governor’s hatred of sin and the dreadful certainty that no sin will go unpunished. If such an ordeal of suffering was endured by the Godhead to make the forgiveness of sin possible, sinful rebellion must be viewed as a colossal tragedy in the moral government of God, to be feared by all.
  - (b) The cross of Christ becomes a *road-block* in the life of the pardoned sinner, which makes sinful detours difficult (1 Jn 3:6, Ga 5:17, Ro 6:1-2). To them, “*the cross... is the power of God*” (1 Co 1:18). It is a *sword* in the *hands* of the Holy Spirit to ward off sin (as Nu 22:22-35).
2. Revealed the moral character of the Godhead and thus opened the door to full restoration and fellowship (Jn 17:3, Phil 3:10). **The PERSONAL or God-ignorance and confidence problem.**

True friendship must be based upon a mutual intimate knowledge. Christ by His life and sufferings put the Godhead on exhibition (Jn 1:18, 14:9,11), unfolding before man the following realities:

- (a) God is love and is mercifully disposed toward sinners, willing to forgive freely upon evidence of repentance:

Ro 5:8	Jn 3:16-17	1 Jn 4:9-10, 14, 16	Mt 9:36
Mt 15:32	Mt 18:27	Mt 5:43-48	Acts 10:38



- (b) God is also righteous in all His dealings and will not tolerate the least hypocrisy and insubordination. Man must come to love truth and submit to it as God does:

Jn 17:25    Jn 7:16-17    Mt 5:20    Mt 5 to 7  
Lk 6:17-49    Mt 22:34-40    Mk 12:28-34

- (c) God has been unspeakably grieved and filled with indignation over man's sin and persistence therein, in rejection of the Divine measures of love:

Mt 23:37    Jn 1:11    Jn 5:40    Jn 7:17  
Mt 22:18-22    Mt 23:13-36    Mt 15:7-9    Mk 3:5-6

- (d) All the Members of the Godhead shared in the sufferings of redemption, particularly when the Divine circle of fellowship was of necessity broken during the climax of the Cross (Mt 27:46):

- i. The Father sent the Son and fellowshiped with Him in all: Jn 5:20, 6:57, 8:29, 16:32, 17:4, 21.
- ii. The Lord Jesus came to bear our burdens, suffer and die: Mt 20:28, Jn 6:51, He 2:9.
- iii. The Holy Spirit filled and endued the incarnated Christ for His life work: Lk 4:1, 16:19, Acts 10:38, He 9:14.

- (e) The "*fear of God*" or loving reverential confidence, is a must in man's relation to God and can only result from receiving these manifestations, as is commanded:

Mt 10:28    Lk 12:15    2 Co 7:1    Ep 5:21    Ep 6:5  
Phil 2:12    Col 3:22    He 4:1    1 Pe 1:17    1 Pe 2:17

3. Provided an irresistible force of humiliation to repentant sinners who allow themselves to be exposed to the dynamic illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the life and sufferings of Christ: (Amos 3:3, 1 Pe 5:5, Lk 24:32). **The PREPARATORY or the hypocrisy-pride problem.**

- Humility is more than voluntary will power. The will must be subdued by moral force or disciplined: He 12:9.
- All must bow the knee in absolute submission, in this life or in the next: Phil 2:10.
- We must realize and be awed by the judgment which our sins deserve before God can allow us to escape their judgment by forgiveness: Jn 5:24, He 9:27, Re 20:11-13.

4. Provided the means for man's complete transformation, and through Christ's resurrection for man's strong motivation and energetic endowment. **The TRANSFORMATIVE or the defilement and renewal problem.**

**Man cannot be regenerated by force or by an implanted instinct, but only by profound moral forces reaching into his innermost personality:**

- (a) Through which the Holy Spirit can cleanse and purify our whole inner personality as we respond in faith to His enlightenment: Ep 2:4-6, Tit 3:4-7, 1 Jn 1:7, 9, Acts 15:8-9, 1 Pe 1:22-23.

- (b) Through which the Holy Spirit can achieve our voluntary happy continuance in a life of submission and obedience to God:

Ro 5:9-10    1 Co 15:1-2    Phil 2:12-13    Col 1:21-23  
 1 Tim 4:16    He 10:38-39    Jas 5:19-20    Re 3:3-5

*“The joy that was set before”* the Lord and which moved Him to endure the Cross (He 12:2) was that He might bring *“many sons unto glory* (He 2:10).

## Summary

The simple statement of the Bible seems to be, that sin is such a dreadful tragedy in the kingdom of God that it cannot be disposed of in any simple manner. Some equivalently terrible event must be brought to pass to deal honorably with the matter. God may be ever so ready to forgive freely man's sin out of His great bounty of love, but cannot do so simply because there are other conditions and problems involved. The judgment of eternal punishment has been pronounced upon sinners for their sins. This woe was pronounced out of God's love for righteousness and because it is man's true desert, God has said: *“The soul that sins it shall die”* (Eze 18:20). Sin has been committed and continued in with persistence. Can God now reverse Himself and say, *“The soul that sins shall live”* without some great substituted procedure being brought to pass to justify the change?

Of course, the subjects of mercy must absolutely repent of their sinful ways or no mercy at all could be extended. What! Pardon a criminal behind bars who vows by his brazen heart to continue the ways of crime when he is released? Would one respectable judge in the land be found to do such a thing? Certainly God is not less Judicious. Therefore, sincere and honest and humbling repentance there must be, or no forgiveness is possible (Ps 51:17, Lk 13:3, Acts 17:30), to name a few passages.

But God has declared it as a fact emanating from His authority, that even if He is loving and kind and ever so willing to forgive, and if man's heart is ever so broken up in penitence and willing to forsake all sin, still salvation is impossible, for *“without shedding of blood is no forgiveness”* (Heb 9:22). The unloveliness of animal sacrifices were instituted in Old Testament times as a temporary measure to enable God to forgive penitent sinners. That this was temporary is evident from He 10:4. The great fact of the atonement of Christ is stated in He 9:13-14 and 1 Pe 3:18, for example.

Now the Godhead are exceedingly happy in the possibility of the free exercise of mercy on the basis of repentance and faith. The Bible does not systematize all the reasons for the necessity of the awful event of the sufferings of Christ. The Bible does state, however, that in some vital sense the sufferings of Christ from a broken heart over the world's sin, during a brief duration of time unto death, were substituted for the endless punishment of sinners as a measure of righteous forgiveness of sins, when other necessary conditions are met. Beyond this we do not need to go, nor to attempt to exhibit brilliance in any new discovery. When the words reconciliation, propitiation, ransom, redemption, and the like, are used in connection with the sufferings of Christ, we are to understand them as modified by Bible usage and not seek to

inject various shades of meanings that have been developed in the secular world. The blessed Word of God will balance itself out and convey to us the thoughts that God deemed it necessary that we know, if we accept it at face value.

Let it always be remembered that no one is saved because he professes belief in a particular theory of the Atonement, or because he has made a mental deduction that he is saved because he believes in a particular theory. We are saved when we have allowed ourselves to be exposed (in the illumination of the Holy Spirit) to the gruesome fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has come into our world and has suffered the agony of death because of our very sins, have thus been humbled under the guilt of our very sins in repentance, and have committed ourselves wholly in faith to the Saviour's sufferings as the only means of forgiveness, "*As many as received him (all that Christ is and did for us), to them gave he power to become the sons of God*" (Jn 1:12).

When this is done in all intelligence and sincerity, we will receive abundant assurance by the witness of the Holy Spirit that all our past sins have been forgiven (Ro 8:16) and will experience transformation of heart and life (2 Co 5:17). The Thessalonian Christians experienced "*much assurance*" in their salvation (1 Th 1:15), which should be rendered "*much full assurance*" to convey the importance of the words, Peter spoke about rejoicing "*with joy unspeakable and full of glory*" (1 Pe 1:8).

In Old Testament times, when a repentant sinner brought his sacrifice and put his hands solemnly upon its head and saw it slain, confessing his guilt, he was humbled and experienced painful reactions. In a much greater measure, when we come to the cross of the Saviour with our sins in our hands, we will be humbled and be brought into an experience of true virtuous love for the first time in our lives. The Father has been looking for us "*a great way off*" and will welcome us into His loving and forgiving heart and say, "*Let us make merry, and be glad*". "*Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents*" (Lk 15:7). Men are saved by a humbled confrontation with the blessed Atonement, then, and not by theorizing about it.

## Historical Opinions as to the Nature of Christ's Atoning Death

The Apostles and the early Church Fathers presented in simplicity the life and atoning death of Christ as the only way of salvation through repentance and faith, and did not concentrate on developing scientific statements on how this takes place. It appears that we can group the theories of the centuries under four main headings.

### Satisfaction Theory

**Satisfaction theory, a strictly vicarious suffering the exact equivalent of guilt:**

1. Satisfaction to Satan, to whom man had chosen to give allegiance and must be Libe-rated by Christ paying to him the ransom price (common from 3rd to 11th centuries): Irenaeus (130?-202?); Origen (185?-254?); Gregory of Nyssa (335-395); Augustine (354-430); Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153).
2. Satisfaction to God the Father universally for all mankind, through a sacrificial death of the Divine Logos who had become one with lost humanity: Athanasius (296-373), the great defender of the Deity of Christ. In salvation the goodness of God must act consistent with His truthfulness and honour, which involves the principle of justice. "Christ as man endured death for us, inasmuch as He offered Himself for that purpose to the Father". Man must be freed not only from the penalty of sin, but from sin itself and be quickened into life.
3. Satisfaction to the ethical nature or justice of God, which demands absolute legal vindication: Anselm (1033-1109), said to have written the first scientific treatise on the Atonement, 1098. God rightfully demands honour and supremacy which man has refused to give, and thus has incurred a debt to God which can only be paid by punishment or by some substituted satisfaction. The God-Man, Jesus Christ, with austere dignity came into our world and by His immaculate conduct and by His obedience to a gruesome suffering of death acquired merit before God which may be imputed to the believer as a perfect judicial standing.
4. Satisfaction through a mystical union or a sacrificial bearing of the penalty of sin, providing a "relative satisfaction" as distinguished from an absolute strictly legal satisfaction in the full discharge of guilt, as advocated by Anselm, Bernard of Clearview (1091-1153), a pious and influential monk, typical of the majority of theological leaders from Apostolic times up to Anselm and the Reformation, who followed the descriptive statements of the New Testament without pursuing them to ultimate speculative conclusions.
5. Satisfaction to the offended holiness and justice of God through Christ's bearing the full penalty of man's sin in His vicarious death: Luther (1483-1546), Calvin (1509-1564), and early Reformation leaders, who adopted Anselm's principle of strict judicial satisfaction.

The entire guilt and punishment that sinners deserve was transferred to Christ, who by His obedience in life and sufferings endured their total penalty so that sin may no longer be imputed or penalty demanded from those for whom He died, "our sins were transferred to Him by imputation."

6. Satisfaction as above, with greater emphasis in early post-Reformation times upon the active righteousness of Christ being imputed to the believer as a perfect positive standing: Lutheran and Reformed (or Calvinistic) Confessions, and the Federal Headship theory developed by Cocceius (1603-1669) and more fully elaborated by Turretin (1623-1687). Under the Covenant of Works, Adam was the federal head of all mankind so his sin and its consequences is legally imputed to all. This somewhat, replaced the organic or natural relationship theory of guilt for Adam's sin advanced by Augustine (354-430). Through the Covenant of Grace, the Lord Jesus is the federal Head of those who are to experience salvation, being appointed to bear the full guilt of their sins (Adamic and personal) in an atoning death viewed as His passive obedience. By His active obedience to the full demands of Divine law, He is said to have fulfilled perfectly man's requirements and imputes His righteousness to believers so that it is legally considered to be theirs.

Since in the full development of the satisfaction theory, whatever has been accomplished in the Atonement is an exact equivalent of guilt so that salvation proceeds upon the basis of strict judicial justice, in no understandable sense can it, be general or made for everyone in the same sense, or all will be saved since God will not demand a double payment for guilt, Christ's and the sinner's.

## **Governmental Theory**

### **Governmental theory, viewing God as a responsible Moral Governor ruling over All**

1. The sufferings of Christ were necessary to the Divine government, rather than to the Divine nature: Gregory of Nazianzus (330-390). "Is it not plain that the Father received the ransom, not because He, Himself required or needed it, but for the sake of the Divine government of the universe, and because man must be sanctified through the incarnation of the Son of God?". He strongly opposed the idea of a ransom paid to Satan, and could not understand why a ransom should be paid to the Father, he could only fall back on the "economy" of God and put forth no theory of satisfaction. Other early writers, like Athanasius, also mention God's governmental problems.
2. Christ suffered unto death in His human nature, not in His Divine nature, and thus the Atonement was not an infinite value to pay fully for the eternal punishment of sinners, but was graciously accepted by God the Father as sufficient to satisfy Divine justice: Duns Scotus (1265-1308).

In line with the majority of Christian thinkers of the centuries, he held the principle that the Atonement provided a "relative satisfaction" to the Justice of God and proposed his theory in opposition to Anselm, who had insisted upon absolute total equivalent satisfaction through an infinite sacrifice. He came to view the Divine will as not bound

by anything fixed in the Divine nature, but free to decide upon what basis sins could be forgiven.

3. Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, and His grace is extended to all, His atoning sacrifice is in and of itself sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and is intended for all by God the Father. The sacrifice of Christ is not the payment of a debt, nor is it a complete satisfaction of justice for sin. It is a Divinely appointed condition which precedes the forgiveness of sin, just as the death of a lamb or a goat in the Mosaic economy. Christ's sufferings took the place of a penalty, so that His sufferings have the same effect in reconciling God to man, and procuring the forgiveness of sin, that the sinner's endurance of the punishment due to his sins would have had. The sufferings of Christ were not a substituted penalty, but a substitute for a penalty: Jaodus Arminius (1560-1609), Episcopius (1583-1643), Curcellaeus (1586-1659), Limborch (1633-1712), known as Arminianism, outside Holland, Arminianism exerted considerable influence in France, Switzerland, Germany, England, and America, and hence throughout the world through various denominations, especially Methodism.
4. God came to be viewed as a benevolent Ruler exercising control over moral beings by good and wise laws designed for mutual happiness of Himself and them. Regulation in a moral government is by means of promised blessings for conformity and penalties of suffering for disobedience. While God in compassionate mercy is willing to forgive or relax His just claims against rebellious moral beings upon evidence of a willingness to cease from rebellion and return to happy submission. He cannot wisely do so without some terrible measure of enlightenment and suffering by a Being of profound dignity. This must demonstrate before all the dreadful nature and consequences of sin and provide an eternal moral force against further indulgence and heart-break to Himself as well as to them: Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), a prominent Dutch jurist and Arminian theologian, who wrote an important book against Socinianism, 1617.
5. The sufferings and especially the death of Christ were sacrificial, were not the punishment of the law but were equivalent in meaning to it, were representative of it and substituted for it. The demands of the law were not satisfied by it, but the honour of the law was promoted by it as much as this honour would have been promoted by inflicting the legal penalty upon all sinners.

The distributive (or vindictive) justice of God was not satisfied by it, but His general (or justice for the public good) as a responsible Moral Governor was perfectly satisfied. The active obedience or holiness of Christ made possible His virtuous death in man's behalf, but is not legally imputed to the believer. Christ's atonement was made for all men in the same sense. It was necessary on God's account to enable Him as a consistent Ruler to fulfill His moral obligations to His subjects, when repentant sinners are pardoned through a commitment of faith (E. A. Park, 1883): New England Theology Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), his son (1745-1801), Nathaniel Emmons (1745-1840), Caleb Burge (1782-1838), N. W. Taylor (1786-1858), C. G. Finney (1792-1875), Congregationalists (very extensively), "New School" Presbyterians, several groups of Baptists, other groups and leaders in America and England (called "American Theology").

In the governmental theory, the Atonement is not required by the subjective nature or vindictive justice of God before mercy is extended. It is not God in isolation as the injured party, but rather God as a benevolent Ruler in relationship to His moral creatures, with great problems of reconciliation that require solution. These problems involve man's relation to God in intelligent moral government, as well as some means to convey God's very deep reactions toward sin and His abounding mercy toward man in spite of man's desperate rebellion. Man must be broken down before God in deep respect and penitence in a return to a right attitude towards God's loving regulation before forgiveness can take place. The sacred advent and atonement of Christ, therefore, is not merely a measure to discharge guilt by some calculated equivalent. It is the most profound measure conceivable, with an objective to restore a ruptured God-man relationship in all that is involved. The Atonement was, therefore, general in the absolute sense and legally discharged the guilt of no one.

## **Moral Influence Theory**

### **Moral Influence theory, concentrating upon suffering love subduing man's rebellion**

In the moral influence theory, the life and sufferings of Christ were conceived to be an exhibition of Divine love to reconcile man back to God by breaking down his resistance and drawing him back into a life of fellowship with God. There is no specific necessity of satisfying the Divine nature or the problems of God's moral government. The life and sufferings of the God-Man were intended to exert a moral impression upon a hard and impenitent heart, which is thereby melted into contrition, and then received into favour by the boundless compassion of God (Abelard): Clement (150?-220?) and Origen (185?-254?) of Alexandria; Peter Abelard (1079-1142) of France, who opposed Anselm; Horace Bushnell (1802-1876), a lawyer and New England pastor. Many liberals in theology of succeeding generations accepted his general opinions without sharing his deep sincerity.

## **Ethical Example Theory**

### **Ethical Example Theory, viewing sinful man as misguided, needing a virtuous example**

If man is going to realize his potential and be reconciled to God, he must repent and reform his ways. For this, he needs a noble example to challenge him to a new life. Jesus Christ was miraculously brought into our world and thus was more than a mere man (Socinianism), or was natural born and as a religious genius identified himself with God in special devotion to achieve a unique ministry to mankind (Unitarian). His virtuous and loving conduct in life and in death as a noble martyr showed us how we ought to love God and each other, or become converted and reconciled to God: Laelius Socinus (1525-1562) and his nephew Faustus Socinus (1539-1604), in Poland; Unitarians, who trace their views back through Arius (256-336); and others of humanistic opinion (Christ a mere man).

## The Nature and Extent of the Atonement

- **Case 1:** The Atonement was a literal or an exact payment for sin. All are not being saved through it. Therefore, it could not have been made for all.
- **Case 2:** The Atonement was a literal or an exact payment for sin. It was made for all. Therefore, all will be saved through it.
- **Case 3: The Atonement was made for all:**

Is 53:3	Lk 2:10-11	Jn 1:29	Jn 3:16-17	Jn 6:51
2 Co 5:14-15	1 Tim 2:3-6	Tit 2:11	He 2:9	1 Jn 2:2
Is 1:18	Is 45:22	Is 55:1	Eze 18:30-32	Mt 23:37
Mt 28:19-20	Mk 16:15-16	Lk 24:46-47	Jn 5:24	Jn 7:17
Acts 1:8	Acts 10:34-35, 43	Ro 2:11	Re 3:20	

### Only a minority are being saved through it:

Ge 6:5-8	Ge 11:9	Nu 14:1-4	1 Kgs 18:22	Is 53:1
Mt 21:10	Lk 13:23-24	Lk 19:14	Lk 23:21	Jn 5:40
Jn 6:60, 67	Jn 7:7	Jn 16:33	Acts 8:1	Acts 14:22
1 Co 4:13				

**Therefore, it was not a literal or an exact payment for sin.**



## Realization of the tragic consequences of our self-centred lives

- *“So that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God” (Ro 3:19).*
- *“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6).*
- *“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps 34:18).*
- *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise” (Ps 51:17).*
- *“Yet even now, declares the LORD, Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning and rend your heart, And rend your heart and not your garments. Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness. . . ” (Joel 2:12-13).*
- *“For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret” (2 Co 7:7-10).*
- *“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE” (1 Pe 5:5, Jas 4:6).*
- *“The tax collector. . . was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’” (Lk 18:13).*

Man must not only recognize himself as a subject of God’s moral government and acknowledge full responsibility for his own sin, but must give such consideration to the realities of his life and the revealed truths of the Bible and the Gospel as to be thoroughly humbled by them, if he is to be saved. A revolutionary moral change must take place in the process of coming to the climax of saving faith. God can only reconcile and have fellowship with one who is in a state of truth, or with one who is willing to have an intelligent and submissive attitude of love toward God and toward his fellow men:

Mt 7:21-23    Jn 3:19-21    Jn 4:23-24    2 Th 2:10  
 1 Tim 2:4    Jas 4:6-7    1 Jn 2:17    1 Jn 4:7-8, 19

Ep 5:24 (the true "church is subject unto Christ")

Man has chosen voluntarily the pathway of supreme selfishness and has continually persisted in this selfish indulgence without virtuous interruptions, using various means or areas of gratification, until his depravity and moral bondage has had a monstrous development. In this state man has utterly lost all virtuous perspective of life as it ought to be lived in its eternal relations to God and to his fellow men. See under **The Message**, page 18 for summary words and Scripture references on man's state.

Man is awakened to God-consciousness as to the serious consequences of his sinful condition while in this state of selfish concern for his own welfare. He has so accustomed himself to think only of his own happiness and unhappiness, that he is at first motivated to repent only because of what sin has done to himself and the possibility that he might have to spend eternity in hell for his indulgences. He at first cannot be appealed to intelligently and objectively as to what sin has done to God and to his fellow men. He asks only the questions "How does sin affect me? What will my sin cost me? If I have to suffer eternal punishment for my sin, is it worth it?" See:

Mk 10:17 Mk 22-27 (Mt 19:16, 22) Jn 4:15 Jn 6:15, 24, 26 Jn 12:20-25 Jas 4:3

Also see: Mk 10:35-37, 41 (Mt 20:20-21, 24), Phil 2:21

There must take place a revolutionary change from this self-centred life to a God-centred life, or from selfishness to love, if man is to be reconciled to God and be happy in fellowship with God and man. This instantaneous change is the climax of repentance, when the will yields itself up to God, which is quickly followed and associated with the climax of saving faith. It is the force of the love of Christ drawing us to Himself through His sufferings, conquering the seemingly immovable object of our entrenched selfishness. It is our first realization of what true virtuous love is like and sin is embarrassed into defeat. It is so to relive in a few brief moments the sufferings of Christ for us that we are in fact and experience "*crucified (together) with Christ*" (Ga 2:20). "*Our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin*" (Ro 6:6). See also:

Jn 12:24-25 Ro 6:6-8, 22 Ga 5:24 Ga 6:14 Col 2:20 Ga 3:1-4

The body as ruled by sin is terminated in the climaxes of repentance and saving faith. "*So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed*" (Jn 8:36).

Sin must be viewed intelligently and hated intelligently. We must forsake sin because we are fully convinced that it is intrinsically wrong and that a state of holiness, or conformity to God's reasonable requirements, is intrinsically right (Mt 11:28-30, Lk 9:23-25, 14:26-33, Ro 6:16-17, 20-21). We must lose sight of what sin has done to us and look beyond ourselves to view what our sin has done to God and to our fellow men. We must realize our awful guilt in persisting on in selfish rebellion against a loving God and against our fellow men. Only an intimate exposure to the sufferings of Christ on the Cross for our very sins will shake us from our lethargy and awaken us to our true moral character and responsibility. It is the goodness and love of God that is leading us to repentance (Ro 2:4). True love has succeeded where all else had failed.

Salvation is not to be brought into subjection to God contrary to our understanding, but it is to be so satisfied concerning the main elements of truth about God and ourselves that we accept

it in our intelligence, agree happily to live by it, and repent with great sorrow for every day lived in disobedience and moral darkness. Repentance is to admit to ourselves that God has been wholly right and that we have been wholly wrong, and to have a climax of self-renunciation. It is to uphold God in all His dealings with men. But before this climax can take place there must be processes of thought where we in all honesty face ourselves and all the evidence that our minds have been exposed to concerning our relationship to God and to our fellow men. The following appear to be prerequisites to true repentance and saving faith:

## Recognition of responsibilities

**Recognition of our moral relationships and responsibilities.** (Dt 6:4-5, Le 19:18, Lk 10:27).

With great difficulty man has sought to escape from his obvious and revealed responsibilities toward his Creator and Benefactor and toward his fellow men. He is confronted with moral enlightenment on every hand. *"Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil"* (Jn 3:19), and are refusing to recognize what they perceive to be true because of an unwillingness to conform (Jn 3:20). It is absolutely necessary that we cease to suppress any moral enlightenment that dawns upon our minds from any source, if we are going to be saved. It is not that a great deal of understanding of our moral obligations to God and man is required, but that we fully recognize and submit to the understanding that we do have, with an attitude of sincerity to comprehend all that we can.

1. Man must cease to reject the moral force of his natural discoveries and be willing to conform his life to them. By natural discoveries we mean those conclusions that man can come to apart from the Bible. The Bible very plainly teaches, and always implies, that moral beings in the right exercise of their minds are in possession of a great deal of moral enlightenment which portrays to them their essential moral obligations to God and man. These natural observations are the basis of guilt and condemnation: Ro 1:18-20, 2:11, 12, 14-16, 3:19, 23 (*"all the world. . . guilty"*), Jn 1:9, 12:32, 16:8-11. Those who have never heard the Gospel, nor of the Bible, are still *"WITHOUT EXCUSE"* (Ro 1:20). Unrepentant man is having great difficulty attempting to *"suppress the truth in unrighteousness"* (Ro 1:18).

This moral light appeals directly to the mind for acceptance and may be dimmed, or its force eliminated, by philosophical reasoning: Acts 17:28, Ro 1:18, Col 2:8, 2 Tim 4:4. Our native unreasoned reactions are very dependable. It appears that the following impressions or concepts are arrived at by observing minds:

- (a) There must be an adequate First Cause who has designed and brought all these profound things into existence.
- (b) This First Cause must be incomprehensibly great in power.
- (c) Must be exceedingly great in knowledge and wisdom.

- (d) Must be of great kindness and goodness, judging from the multitude of benevolent adaptations which we observe.
- (e) Must be absolutely faithful in the discharge of His responsibility, from the regularities which we observe.
- (f) This First Cause must be a spiritual personal "Being above the material existences which have been created, as we affirm our real selves to be above our physical existences".
- (g) Must be everywhere present, not localized as we are.
- (h) Must possess endless duration or eternal life.
- (i) Our fellow men are moral beings like ourselves, whose happiness is just as important as our own.

**The EMPHATIC RESULT** of all these observations is that all moral beings, in the right use of their faculties, affirm their perpetual **OBLIGATION** to regard supremely with appropriate veneration the Being and happiness of God, the Great First Cause and Benefactor of the universe, and equally the rights and happiness of and welfare of their fellow men. That all men affirm these obligations is attested to by the universal prevalence of religious exercises among peoples who have not heard of Biblical revelation. Some of the tortures involved testify to their deep feeling of guilt which can only spring from great moral light. Thus the knowledge of the Gospel greatly adds to the guilt of those rejecting it but is not the basis of condemnation.

2. Man must receive and admit all the truth that he understands the Bible to reveal concerning God, concerning his guilty and hopeless state, and concerning the advent and sufferings of Christ. We instinctively believe that God possesses knowledge that would vindicate the Divine Being from all responsibility for the existence of evil and that God is able to communicate this knowledge to us. From the deep recesses of our souls comes the cry of the Psalmist: *"Give me understanding and I shall live"* (Ps 119:144). The Bible, therefore, is what we would expect a God of love and intelligence to bestow upon mankind.

We must receive the Bible as a revelation from God and be willing to learn from its pages, if we are going to be saved. We must not only *"come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4), but must reach out in love toward the truth in all honesty (2 Th 2:10). Salvation in a state of unbelief, or a refusal to believe what is known, is impossible (Mk 16:16, Tit 15:53, He 3:12, Re 21:8). *"The truth shall make you free"* said the Lord Jesus (Jn 8:32).

## Acknowledgement

**Acknowledgement of total responsibility for our sins** (1 Jn 3:4, Ro 1:20, 3:19, 14:12).

To come to this conclusion is a very painful one and requires an honest approach to our situation. If we can blame our sin and guilt upon our constitutional nature or weakness, upon

our circumstances or environment, upon injustices in God's moral government, or upon the secret permissive will of God that sin should come into the world, if not God's direct will, then we have found a legitimate excuse for our sin and can escape from an acknowledgement of total personal guilt. In this state of mind, the self-condemnation which must precede repentance and the total commitment of faith is impossible.

1. All self-excuses for our sin must be eliminated before we can possibly acknowledge ourselves as totally morally bankrupt before the great God.
  - (a) We cannot blame our sin upon any constitutional nature or weakness which we may have inherited. We cannot say that we were unable to fulfill God's reasonable and loving requirements. As discussed under Rebellion, depravity of constitution and our own developed moral depravity strongly influences toward a life of self-indulgence, but it is not the cause of sinful actions.
  - (b) We cannot blame our sin upon our circumstances or environment. Man is a psychophysical personality having both spiritual and physical elements. Man contacts his surroundings through five senses: Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Our relation to the earth and its sustaining forces imposes burdens and bodily limitations. Our relationship to our fellow men make possible defilement and degradation. While our environment greatly affects the development of our depravity or the increase of our moral bondage, it is we ourselves who choose these various avenues of wrongful gratification. Our environment becomes the occasion of sinful actions, but we ourselves are the cause of their furtherance.
  - (c) We cannot find complacency by saying that sinful guilt has been unjustly charged against us in God's moral government. If the Bible affirmed that we are held accountable for other's sins, and particularly for Adam's sins, this would become such a gross injustice in the economy of God as to erect a barrier to intelligent thought and the meaning of guilt. Under Consequences (See in Chapter 6, page 84), it was established that God in perfect righteousness shall judge every man for his own sin according to the spiritual enlightenment that each one was favoured with, no Biblical proof being found of the imputation of any one else's guilt. No one can object to God's dispensations of justice.
  - (d) We cannot find comfort in our guilt by the thought that God may have been in some sense at least partially to blame for the entrance of sin into the world. Under Rebellion (See in Chapter 5, page 75), we concluded that man was fully to blame for the entrance of sin into the world and for its persistent perpetuation. Man having been endowed with the moral image of God was given the responsibility of creating his own moral character, which he chose to abuse by violating his understanding. Sin did not enter the world because man was created deficient, nor because it was God's will, nor because of any failure on God's part to exert every influence to the contrary. The agonizing grief and disappointment of the Godhead over sin proves that God had no part in it.
2. We must understand that sin is always a wrong voluntary attitude or purpose of life, which we alone can change by a revolutionary choice of will. In our discussion of Rebellion

(See in Chapter 5, page 70), we saw that sin is not an abstract thing which invades and lodges somewhere in our personalities, but is rather an orderly sequence of wrong conduct involving our whole personalities which we have individually chosen and energetically persist in.

- (a) Old Testament words describe man as a rebel against a loving God, not as a subject of pity who has lost his ability of will and thus could not help sinning. Man's life of sin is voluntary and inexcusable.
- (b) New Testament words likewise stress the idea of the wickedness and inexcusableness of sin. We look in vain for any proof that sin is anything else than a wrong action, a voluntary activity involving locomotion or dynamic.
- (c) All sin can be resolved into a wrong ultimate choice to seek our own happiness supremely, which we persist in with our whole personality, and choose various areas of gratification which we think will further our own happiness the most. A change in the means of self-gratification will not change our moral character. Only a dethronement of self and making Jesus Lord of our lives will avail anything. We have no excuse to hide behind, only our own stubborn wills choosing to perpetuate our own supreme happiness.

## Moral forces that convicts us

Moral forces that lead us to that realization of the awfulness of our self-centered lives which must precede the climaxes of repentance and saving faith (Job 42:5-6, Lk 18:13).

1. Endless personal experiences and observations of the external universe awakens our minds to the greatness and goodness of our great Benefactor, and begins the process of humiliation and self-abasement. As we face limitations and calamities along with the intricate wonders of nature, our consciences rise up to assert our own guilt as the reason for all these irregularities and disturbances.
2. Faithful Christian witness to the realities and truths of the Gospel arouses men's minds and furthers the process of self-examination and conviction. Most everyone who becomes a Christian has seen one in operation at some time or other, and has therefore come face to face with Divine realities of mercy. Somewhere there has been a personal contact with one who lived the words: "*Christ in you the hope of glory*" (Col 1:27).
3. The Bible, as a revelation from God to man through "*holy men of God*" who "*spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Pe 1:21), becomes the instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit and faithful Christians through which "*all the world may become guilty before God*" (Ro 3:19). The fact that God has sought the recovery of man's lost estate through the progressive revelations of the Bible lays before man a great force of love to subdue his heart.

4. God's reasonable approach toward man in the Bible inspires the mind to think through every problem of doubt, which is the only way that the heart of man can be thoroughly humbled. All professed humility which is not based upon a satisfying understanding of the problems of life is superficial. When we understand God's point of view and intelligently acknowledge our true rebellion and false accusations against God, then "*the fountains of the deep*" of our souls are unloosed and with openness and honesty we can meet God "*face to face*" over the sin question in our lives.
5. The compassionate earthly life and teachings of the Lord Jesus is God's final approach to the mind of man to demonstrate what true holiness is like and to convince man of the emptiness and stupidity of every other form of life. Holiness is nothing else than an application of true intelligence as to what is right conduct in all our moral relations. If man takes time to ponder in all honesty what these relations and obligations are, he will forge within his mind the true concept of duty. Truth will purge the mind from every error. If it is submitted to and not resisted, it will lead to the application of God's great rejuvenating forces of mercy and a glorious eternal life with God and our fellow men.
6. The sufferings and grief of the Godhead over man's rebellion and persistence in sin, as revealed from beginning to end in the Bible, should reinforce the reasonable approach of God with such moral force as to break down our hearts in abhorrence for every hour we have contributed to the unhappiness of the great Divine Personalities, who only desire to love and bless man with Their presence, "*The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart*" (Ge 6:6). "*I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me*" (Eze 6:9). "*You are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life*" lamented the Lord Jesus (Jn 5:40). "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock*", said the resurrected Christ (Re 3:20). Most do not open the door of their heart.
7. The blessed atonement of Christ, as made living and real by the illumination of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:14-15), leads us into a experience of "*togetherness*" that enslaves the humbled soul to the great love of God. When viewed in all its significance, the atonement of Christ becomes the greatest moral force that has ever been devised, in that it involves the greatest humiliation and manifestation of love that could ever be thought of in the Divine mind. No wonder, then, that everyone who has allowed himself to come closer to reality than even those who "*smote their breasts*" and turned away with awe at this scene of earth's greatest tragedy, will never be the same for its contemplation. They looked upon the external, we are more privileged to look within the loving heart of Christ and be assured that His was not basically a physical death, but a human expiration under the heaviest load ever borne "*the sins of the whole world*" (1 Jn 2:2).

It is one of the grave problems in the reconciliation of man to himself that God purposes in love to achieve, that man must be so totally deflated so that he will not "*think more highly of himself than he ought to think*" (Ro 12:3). Humility is more than voluntary will power. True humility can only be achieved through the use of a moral force of humility. When the Saviour gathered His disciples for a last time of earthly fellowship, He was deeply grieved at their competitive spirit of pride for earthly station and recognition (Lk 22:24). Their kind Master told them that such greatness was not the basis of operation

in His kingdom. After affirming what true greatness was, in the words, *"I am among you as the one who serves"*(Lk 22:27). He proceeded to use the most barbed whip possible, the manifestation of His humility. As He took off His outer garments and assumed the place of a slave to wash their feet, the pain of pride started to be felt. Peter exclaimed in obvious embarrassments *"Never shall You wash my feet!"* (Jn 13:8). But when his heart was humbled to the level of the Saviour's, he wanted to draw closer and partake fully of the Saviour's love, saying: *"Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head"* (Jn 13:9). Thus the secret power of the love of Christ, as poured out unto death, will devastate the last vestige of pride from haughty superficial hearts. The Cross must discover ourselves to ourselves and awaken us to our total moral bankruptcy.



## Abandonment of selfishness or supreme self-interest as an end in life

- *“Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him” (Is 55:7).*
- *“Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. Cast away from you all your transgressions. . .” (Eze 18:30-32).*
- *“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk 13:3, 5).*
- *“Repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations” (Lk 24:47).*
- *“God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30).*
- *“Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).*
- *“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE” (1 Pe 5:5, Jas 4:6).*
- *“The tax collector. . . was beating his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner!” (Lk 18:13).*

Salvation or reconciliation is a voluntary agreement on the part of both God and man to have a changed relationship. The word *salvation* embodies the idea of rescuing one from danger and destruction. When used in a spiritual sense, it is to rescue or deliver a sinner from the consequences of his sin. Salvation implies the idea of helplessness, for if one can save himself from a given situation, he has no need to depend upon another. We are absolutely dependent upon the mercy of God, but we must be willing to allow God to save us along with everything that is involved. It is absolutely imperative that man repents of all known sin as the first condition of salvation. Man must renounce his wrong actions in all appropriate solemnity before Divine actions can be taken to heal the wounds of sin in God and man. If only one of the parties is willing, there will be no reconciliation and no salvation.

A *condition* is defined to be something established or agreed upon as a requisite to the doing or taking effect of something else. Something is promised or offered on the basis that certain things shall be done or certain actions taken. Apart from the fulfilment of these definite requirements as specified, the promise is withheld. A condition of something is not that for the sake of which

that something is done, but rather that without which that something cannot be done. It is, therefore, not a cause that merits salvation, but an attitude that must prevail if salvation is to take place. The blessed gospel of Christ is an offer of mercy and reconciliation to God, with untold joy. God has wisely determined upon what terms it is to be offered, or what man must do to partake of Gospel benefits. It is clear everywhere in the Bible that man must take certain definite action if he is to be reconciled to God. To abandon is to surrender control or ownership. Man must abandon all conscious rebellion and self-ownership and allow God to have His rightful place.

## Voluntary Attitude

### **What voluntary attitude or state of being does man have to repent from if he is to partake of God's wonderful salvation?**

We have seen that sin is a refusal to live intelligently, or to conform our lives to truth or to the true state of things. It is a refusal to fulfill our obligations to God and to our fellow men. It is not a weakness but a rebellion. It is not a lack of understanding but a violation of understanding. God by virtue of His greatness and importance is to have man's supreme allegiance. Men by virtue of their equal status are to have equal consideration with ourselves. No other state of balance can be affirmed by the intelligence, and yet man attempts to justify himself in a supremely selfish manner of life, which is the essence of sin. God's loving and reasonable requirements for man were given in the Ten Commandments. "*Sin is lawlessness*" (1 Jn 3:4), or a refusal to conform. Sin must always be a voluntary something, an act of will, and cannot be a fixed something or a static deposit of some kind back of the will causing action. Man thus incurs guilt and may be punished justly for his persistence in his state of non-conformity, yes truly, the justice of God's moral government demands that rebellious man be punished. This is the defiant attitude that must be terminated in repentance before salvation can take place.

1. Man has lost all true perspective of life in its eternal relations to God and to his fellow men. An extended New Testament description of man's tragic state was given under The Message (See in Chapter 2 ). These many descriptions leave no question that man needs a revolutionary repentance.
2. The words used in the Old Testament to describe sin show overwhelmingly man's free will or voluntariness in his life of sin. Under Rebellion (See in Chapter 5, page 70).
3. The words used in the New Testament to describe sin carries forth the same idea of its wickedness and inexcusableness. Under Rebellion (See in Chapter 5, pages 70, 73). Certainly a complete turn from this whole manner of life is imperative if God and man are to find happiness together and men enjoy each other.
4. All sin can be resolved into a wrong ultimate choice to seek our own happiness supremely. Sin is a wrong motive of heart. Sin is always a voluntary state or attitude of will. The will determines the nature or character, rather than the nature of the will. The unrepentant

sinner is determined to make himself happy at the expense of God and man, and chooses means to further this end according to his tendencies and environment. *"From within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts"* (Mk 7:21).

5. It is impossible to have a divided personality, and therefore the supreme choice of self-gratification permeates the whole being and leaves no room for isolated virtuous actions. Man's being is entirely involved in the pursuit of sin: Mt 6:22-24, 7:17-20, 12:33-35, Jn 3:19-21, Ro 6:16.
6. This supreme selfish choice is persisted in without virtuous interruptions from the dawn of moral accountability until the awakening of genuine repentance. Sinful indulgence in one form or another is continuous. By this it is intended that when certain actions appear to be good in themselves, there is a selfish motive which eliminates virtues Ro 3:10-12, Mt 6:5, Is 64:6.
7. The designation *"our old man"* is brought in by the Apostle Paul to sum up all that unrepentant sinners are (Ro 6:6, Ep 4:22, Col 3:9). We notice to our humiliation that it is *"our old man"*, something that we are the author of. It is the whole man in action, a manner of life which *"is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts (or desires)"*. *"Our old man"* must be crucified or the old manner of life terminated.

## Why is Repentance Necessary?

### Why is repentance necessary to salvation and reconciliation with God?

1. A God of love can only purpose to reconcile man back into blessed fellowship, for which man was created. This is only possible if man is willing to have a revolutionary change of purpose.
2. Reconciliation in falsehood under the penetrating all-knowing eye of God is impossible. Therefore we must *"come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4), or make such a change in our whole attitude that we have nothing that we are attempting to hide. The Father dwells in truth (Jn 17:17), also the Lord Jesus (Jn 14:6), and the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:17).
3. Reconciliation between two moral beings, who have been separated over some issue that involves moral action, is only possible by a voluntary agreement on both sides to end the separation. God longs to, so must man.
4. By the very nature of reconciliation it is assumed that the attitudes that have caused the estrangement shall be terminated. All sin separates. *"God who has indignation every day with the wicked"* (Ps 7:11), and rightly so. Humanly speaking, no one would think of seeking reconciliation between two individuals unless the cause of the problem is remedied and terminated. It is man's voluntary actions of rebellion that aggravates God. Man must renounce his wrong action in repentance if the aggravation is to cease

and peace be restored. How could God reconcile those who refuse to throw down their weapons of rebellion?

5. The Gospel is a remedy designed to remove the consequences of sin in our lives in a cleansing and purifying our whole inner beings. How can God remove the consequences of sin if we will not let go of the very thing that caused these consequences? If God would momentarily cleanse us, our continuance in sin would make this of no avail since we would immediately defile ourselves again by wrong thoughts and actions. God cannot cleanse what we are continually adding to, thus there must be repentance or the termination of the flow of evil in our hearts.
6. Unless God can find a way to forgive sin while it is going on, or forgive what has not occurred as yet and therefore has no present guilt in the Divine government, man must repent and stop the flow of sin in order to be brought to the point where he is not under condemnation. What good would it do to forgive some sins of a chain if the links of sin are still being forged? If God forgave sin apart from repentance, man would be in the predicament of continuing *"in sin that grace may abound"* (Ro 6:11). The Apostle answers: *"How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"* (Ro 6:2). The Bible says nothing about the forgiveness of present or future sins, and everywhere implies, what our common sense affirms, that all sin brings condemnation and must be repented of and confessed before forgiveness can take place through faith in the atonement of Christ. We must repent, then, to be free from guilt and condemnations (On 1 Jn 1:8, see 1:7, 9, 2:1, 17, 29, 3:4, 6-10, 5:4, 18, 3 Jn 11).
7. Sin and happiness are totally incompatible. The eternal happiness of heaven can only become a reality, therefore, by the elimination of all sin. Where is sin eliminated? We have seen that all sin attaches to the heart, man's innermost being, and thus will not be eliminated in the process of physical death. There must be repentance somewhere. *"And nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it"* (Re 21:27) Thus repentance must take place in this life of probation.
8. *"The old man with his deeds"* must be *put off* by a crucifixion in Christ's similitude, *"our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin"* (Ro 6:6, Col 3:9). Just as the caterpillar must emerge from the cocoon to move about in a new kind of life and be prepared to enter a higher form of life with increased mobility, just so we must emerge from *our old man* and *put on the new man* as the gateway to unlimited God-consciousness in the glory land. *"Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth"* (Ep 4:24). There is no reason, therefore, why we should not repent but every reason why we should.

## Repentance: The First Condition

**Has repentance always been required and is it now required as the first condition of salvation and reconciliation?**

**Repentance from all known sin always has been and always will be the first condition of salvation and reconciliation to God.** Salvation without repentance is totally impossible for the reasons mentioned. God is dealing with free and responsible moral agents in salvation not with machines or creatures who are moved by instinct. God can save no one against his will. **God can save no one without transforming the entire personality of the one being saved. The sinner must be willing to be transformed by the grace of God.** He must be willing to give up his sinful ways and be separated from his sins. *"You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"*, said the angel to Joseph (Mt 1:21). No one is to be saved in his sins. Just as sin is a turn to our own supreme selfish gratification (Is 53:16), so repentance is a turn away from this rebellious and unintelligent state of mind to conform our lives to truth and to the will of God (1 Jn 2:17).

1. That men must turn from all sinful ways, or repent toward God from the very bottom of their hearts, before God can extend His merciful forgiveness, is directly asserted in both the Old and New Testaments:

Ge 6:3, 5, 8, 7:1 (Noah *"a preacher of righteousness"* 2 Pe 2:5).

Dt 4:29-31 (25-33)	2 Kgs 17:12-14	2 Chr 7:14	Ps 34:18	Ps 51:17
Prov 28:13	Is 1:16-18	Is 55:6-7	Jer 4:14	Jer 36:3
Eze 3:16-19	Eze 14:6 (2-8)	Eze 15:27-28	Eze 18:20-23	Eze 18:30-32
Eze 33:11	Eze 33 14-16	Hos 10:12	Joel 2:12-14	Jonah 3:5-10
Zech 1:3-4	Mal 3:7	Mt 3:2	Mk 1:14-15	Lk 5:32
Lk 13:3, 5	Mk 6:12	Lk 24:45-57	Mt 28:19-20	(Lk 14:33)
(Jn 10:27)	Acts 2:37-39	Acts 3:19, 26	Acts 5:29-32	Acts 11:12-18
Acts 17:30-31	Acts 20:20-21	Acts 26:18-20	Ro 2:4	1 Co 6:11
2 Co 7:9-10	Ep 2:1-3	Ep 5:14	Phil 3:17-9	1 Th 1:9-10
Tit 2:11-14	He 6:1, 6	Jas 1:19-22	1 Pe 1:22-23	1 Pe 3:12
2 Pe 3:9	Re 2:4-5	Re 3:19-20		

2. Men must fear God or have a reverential attitude toward God with proper respect to the austere dignity of the Godhead, if they are going to be saved. Thus, there must be repentance. Some passages declaring this are:

2 Chr 34:26-28	Ps 2:11	Ps 103:13	Ps 111:10	Ps 138:6
Is 57:15	Is 66:2	Lk 1:50	Mt 5:3-4	Lk 4:18-19
(Is 61:1-2)	Acts 9:6	Acts 16:29-30	Phil 2:12-13	He 12:28-29
Jas 4:6	1 Pe 1:17	1 Pe 2:17	1 Pe 5:5	1 Jn 4:18

And 1 Jn 5:14 (humble confidence)

3. Men must turn from a state of disobedience to a state of obedience, and continue therein, if they are going to be saved. Men must repent in such a way that they remain in a state of repentance:

Dt 13:17-18	2 Chr 30:8-9	Ps 84:10-11	Ps 86:11	Micah 6:8
Mt 7:21-23 (24-27)	Lk 11:28	Acts 5:32	Ro 1:5	Ro 2:6-11
Ro 6:16-18	2 Co 10:5	2 Th 1:8	Tit 2:11-14	He 5:9
1 Pe 1:22	1 Jn 2:4	1 Jn 2:17	1 Jn 3:10	

4. Men must turn to love God and man if they are to partake of the only salvation that God offers, thus there must be a repentant renunciation of the life of selfishness if God's mercy is to be exercised:

Ex 20:16	Le 19:18	Lv 19:34	Dt 6:4-6	Dt 7:9-11
Dt 10:12-13	Dt 11:1	Dt 30:15-20	Josh 22:5-6	Neh 1:4-5
Ps 145:20	Mt 5:44-48	(Lk 6:31, 32-36)	Lk 10:25-28	(Mt 22:37-39)
Jn 5:42	Jn 8:42	Jn 15:6	Jn 15:9-10, 12	Ro 5:5
1 Co 8:3	1 Co 16:22	Ga 5:22	1 Th 4:9	2 Th 2:10
Jas 2:5	1 Pe 2:17	1 Jn 2:5	1 Jn 3:14	1 Jn 4:7-8, 20
1 Jn 5:2-3	Jude 21			

5. Men must turn to a benevolent forgiving state of mind if God is to exercise mercy in the forgiveness of sin, and must remain in this state as a condition of continued mercy. Thus repentance or a revolution of mind is imperative:

Ps 18:25-26	Mt 5:7	Mt 6:12-15	Mt 6:9-15	(Lk 6:37)
Mk 11:24-26	Mt 18:32-35	Mt 18:27-35	Ep 4:32	Col 3:12-13

It would be completely wrong for God to forgive an unforgiving spirit, and thus such a state prevents God from extending mercy. Repentance sees the immensity of our debt toward God as compared to any man's debt to us and freely forgives (Mt 18:24, 28). Notice that no former state will void the consequences of Mt 18:35.

6. God is no respecter of persons, and therefore it is man's reactions to God's pleadings in mercy that enables God to make a difference between men in forgiving one and not another. Man's reaction determines God's reaction:

Job 34:10-12	Ps 62:12	Prov 24:12	Jer 32:17-19	Eze 7:27
Eze 18:30	Eze 33:17-20	Mt 16:26-27	Mt 22:16	Acts 10:34-35
Ro 2:6, 11	Ga 2:6	Ep 6:9	Col 3:25	1 Pe 1:17

7. Men must repent with such sincerity and earnestness that they will seek God with all their heart in a humble attitude of prayer if the barrier to the exercise of God's loving mercy is to be removed. God does not need to be persuaded by prayer to be merciful, for He is merciful already, but God must be persuaded that we really purpose to forsake our sins before He can see it wise and safe to open to us His *floodgates* of mercy. In this process of humiliation and prayer, man comes to that full willingness to confess and forsake all his sins. This climax is the moment of repentance for which God is looking, and causes joy to spring up in heaven "*over one sinner that repents*" (Lk 15:7).

The following Scriptures indicate how all men must seek the Lord in penitence before pardon can be extended:

2 Chr 30:18-19	Ps 25:6-7, 11	Ps 32:3-5	Ps 34:18	Ps 41:4
Ps 51:1-2, 17	Ps 86:15-16	Is 45:21-23	Is 55:6	Jer 29:13
Dan 9:3-5	Dan 9:9-10	Dan 9:17-19	Joel 2:12-14	Mt 7:7-8
Lk 13:23-25	Lk 18:13-14	Acts 2:21	Acts 9:9, 11	Acts 9:17
(Acts 15:8-9)	Acts 15:17	Acts 17:24-27	Acts 17:30	Acts 22:16
Ro 10:13	1 Co 14:24-25	2 Co 6:2	2 Co 7:9-10	Jas 4:8-10
1 Jn 1:9	He 11:6			

## What is not Repentance?

1. Not remorse, regret, sorrow, or penance, although these elements of experiences will always precede repentance. Repentance is more than this (2 Co 7:9).
2. Not a change in subordinate choices or the means of self-gratification, but only a renunciation of the supreme choice of selfishness.
3. Not a partial change in ultimate intention or purpose in life. We cannot partly repent and partly not repent, or be partly selfish and partly not selfish at the same time.
4. Not a professed reversal of life under emotional pressure or fear of the consequences of our sins. While these elements are always present in the process of moral awakening, we are intelligent beings and must decide to forsake sin because it is wrong, and love God supremely and our fellow men equally because it is right. We must not only submit to truth but must come to have *"the love of the truth"*.
5. Not an endeavour partially to merit salvation by turning to live in such a way as to commend ourselves to God and make it easier for God to forgive us. This is a natural tendency for an awakened sinner before he realizes how selfishly corrupt his life has really been. He thinks that by doing a little extra for God or giving a sum of money his situation with God will be eased.

## Describing Repentance

### What words are commonly used in Scripture to describe repentance?

1. Old Testament words commonly used:
  - (a) To repent (*naw-kham'*, S-5162<sup>1</sup>) The word basically implies difficulty in breathing and properly means to sigh, to pant, to groan, to breathe strongly or draw the breath forcibly. The word came to signify to be sorry, to grieve, to lament, to regret, to

<sup>1</sup>Transliterations of the various Hebrew and Greek words into English letter equivalents are given, along with the number references from the Hebrew and Greek Dictionary portions of Strong's Concordance, for identification.

suffer remorse or to repent because of one's actions; also to grieve on account of the misery of anyone, hence to pity, console or comfort.

It is translated repent about 40 times, of which about 33 times refers to the actions of God in an aroused state of emotion (as Ge 6:6-7, Ex 32:12, 14, 1 Sam 15:11, 35, Jer 18:8, 10, Jonah 3:9-10, 4:2). Some of the instances where it is used in this sense of man are: Ex 13:17, Jud 21:6, Job 42:6, Jer 8:6, 31:19.

- (b) To turn (*shoob*, S-59725) To turn about, to return, to turn back, thus metaphorically to be converted, as a sinner; to turn one's self to a person or thing, to have a radical change in one's attitude toward sin and God, with a complete turn to righteousness. The verb is very extensively used in various structures and renderings. It is used many times concerning God's actions, as Ps 90:13. Examples concerning man turning from sin are:

Dt 4:30-31    1 Sam 7:3    2 Chr 6:24-25    2 Chr 6:37-39    Neh 1:9  
 Is 55:7        Jer 3:12-14    Jer 18:8        Hos 14:1-2        Jon 3:8, 10  
 Zech 1:3-4    Mal 3:7

In Eze 14:6 and 18:30-32 we have a double use of the same verb, "*Return you and turn yourselves*", giving "idea of grief and altered relation".

## 2. New Testament words commonly used:

- (a) To repent (*metanodo*, S-3340\*) To change one's mind or purpose, to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to make a change in principle and practice to reform, equivalent to the Old Testament word *turn*; derived from *metá* expressing the idea of change, and *noéo*, to think, understand, conceive, apprehend. Some usages are:

Mk 1:15    Mk 6:12    Lk 13:3, 5    Lk 15:7, 10    Acts 2:38  
 Acts 3:19    Acts 17:30    Acts 26:20    Re 2:5        Re 2:16, 22  
 Re 3:3, 19

- (b) Repentance (*metánoya*, S-3341) A change of mind of mode of thought and feeling, the noun form from above verb; from *metá* and *nóya*, which is from *noús*, the intellect, mind, or understanding in thought, feeling, and will. Some usages are:

Lk 3:3, 8    Lk 5:32    Lk 24:47    Acts 5:31    Acts 11:18  
 Acts 20:21    Acts 26:20    Ro 2:4    2 Co 7:9, 10    2 Pe 3:9

- (c) To turn about (*epistrépho*, S-1994) To turn back, around, or towards, to return, to convert, to turn one's self about or around; from *epí* upon, also used for emphasis, and *strépho*, to turn or change (used in Mt 18:3). See the following usages:

Mt 13:15    Lk 22:32    Acts 3:19    Acts 9:35    Acts 11:21  
 Acts 14:15    Acts 15:19    Acts 26:18, 20    1 Th 1:9    Jas 5:19-20  
 1 Pe 2:25

The noun form appears only in Acts 15:3. A kindred verb, *apostrépho* (S-654) to turn away, appears in Acts 3:26.



## What is Repentance?

Repentance is, negatively, an intelligent climactic renunciation of the whole principle of supreme selfishness as an end of life, with proper evaluation of the awfulness of sin and its consequences to God and man, and a firm determination to be through with it forever because of its intrinsic hatefulness and, positively, a presentation of ourselves to God as ruined moral beings for full Divine ownership for whatever the grace of God can make out of us.

Repentance is to *“turn about (instantly) toward (or facing, denoting direction) God from (or away from, implying separation) the idols (phantom or fantasies of the mind, false gods) to yield obedience (continually) (to be a slave or servant) to God living and true, and to wait for His Son out of from the heavens”* (1 Th 1:9-10). Repentance is an intelligent evaluation of one’s past life of self-centred gratification, with a firm resolve to abandon all sinful indulgences in a return to discipleship and the Lordship of Christ as Saviour. It is a revolutionary change in the ultimate intention in life, with a vow to be diligent in the choice of subordinate actions to the glory of God (1 Co 10:31). It is to *“put off... the old man,... and... put on the new man”* (Ep 4:22-24). *“For you were as sheep (continually) going astray (wandering or roaming about), but you did turn yourselves about (or turn around, instantly) now to the Shepherd and bishop of your souls”* (1 Pe 2:25).

## Is Man able to Repent?

In our discussion of the nature of sin we saw that it is always a voluntary state or attitude of will in supremely preferring our own happiness rather than God’s and our fellow men’s. While depravity strongly influences the will and has been developed to its present strength by our own actions, nevertheless we are the author of our own actions. So-called inability is a question of *“will not”* rather than *“cannot”* obey God’s reasonable requirements. It should be enough to review the Biblical descriptions of sin, and the plain commands of God for man to repent, to establish beyond doubt man’s present ability (Is 1:16-18, 55:6-7, Hos 10:12, Mt 3:2, Lk 13:3, 5, Acts 17:30-31). Would a God of love command man to do what he is unable to do and then threaten eternal punishment because man does not do what he is unable to do? This needs no answer.



## Commitment of ourselves to the Atoning Death of Christ as our only hope

- *“For he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (He 11:6).*
- *“Through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins” (Acts 10:43).*
- *“Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).*
- *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day” (Jn 6:44).*
- *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ep 2:8-9).*
- *“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Ro 10:9-10).*
- *“Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (He 12:2).*

The Lord Jesus made claims during His brief sojourn on earth that no other man had ever made. He claimed to be unique as to His person and ministry in the absolute sense. His unique claims of Deity were so well understood by His religious persecutors that they *“took up stones again to stone him”*.

This was the only answer to their gnawing consciences. The Lord Jesus did not die as a martyr who could no longer hold off his opponents, but as *“the good shepherd”* who *“lays down His life for the sheep”* (Jn 10:11). Victory could only be won the hard way by meeting all the problems for man’s full deliverance. There was only one Gospel. To submit to the loving forgiveness of God the Father through the atoning death of Christ, was a state so logical and beautiful, and to refuse so illogical and rebellious, that the Apostle Paul was moved to write: *“If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed”* (1 Co 16:22).

In the section on repentance or abandonment, it was said that salvation or reconciliation is a voluntary agreement on the part of both God and man to have a changed relationship. A

*condition* is something established or agreed upon as a requirement to the fulfilling of something else. It is not something for the sake of which something else is done, but rather that without which that something cannot be done. **A condition** is thus to be distinguished from **a cause**. **We have seen that repentance, or a total abandonment of supreme selfish interest, is the first condition of salvation or reconciliation to God.**

**We now observe that Saving Faith is the Second Condition of Salvation or reconciliation to God.**

## Areas of Truth

### What objects or areas of truth must saving faith consider and take action towards?

Saving faith is a sincere facing of the full truth of reality and an elimination of every internal tension caused by our having rejected the truth of God in any area. Saving faith must involve all that the mind perceives to be true concerning the Godhead and man's relations. It is not that profound enlightenment must precede saving faith, but rather that nothing that we do understand shall be resisted. An open-hearted attitude must prevail toward every aspect of truth that we do perceive. Our life before coming to Christ in salvation consisted in a concentrated effort to "*suppress the truth in unrighteousness*" (Ro 1:18). We sought to thrust out of our minds everything that disturbed us in our selfish manner of life. This attitude must be terminated before saving faith can possibly become a reality. We cannot keep on trying to flee from Divine evidences and truth, but must face it and allow it to affect us. Saving faith cannot cover up any negatives for it is a facing of the great reality of what God has done to redeem us.

1. In saving faith there must be an acceptance of every revealed truth that the Bible as the Word of God imparts to us. What we do not know of its wonders does not become an issue for action, but what we have learned and been persuaded of from its pages cannot be rejected if saving faith is to arise within us.

What the Bible tells us about the Godhead, and particularly about the true Deity and miraculous incarnation of the Lord Jesus and His atoning work, cannot be doubted or rejected. What the Bible tells us about our own persistent sinfulness and moral responsibilities must be received with appropriate realization of guilt. When the Bible affirms that we are dreadfully responsible for our guilt, we cannot go into self-pity and blame Adam or our circumstances, but only ourselves. The Bible is the only source-book we have on the very facts that saving faith must embrace. If we doubt any part of its revelations, how can we truly believe any part of it? "*While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light*", said the Lord Jesus (Jn 12:36).

*"I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness"* (Jn 12:46). *"He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life"* (Jn 5:24). Men are to be saved "*through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth*" (2 Th 2:13). They must receive "*the love of the truth so as to be*

saved" (2 Th 2:10). All who are to be saved must receive the Bible, "not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1 Th 2:13).

2. Saving faith must be directed to God the Father, as a God of love and kindness who is willing to extend mercy and forgiveness when this can be done consistent with all His moral obligations as a righteous Moral Governor. "For he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (He 11:6). "All things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (He 4:13), and thus faith must be operative toward the Father. "No one comes to the Father but through Me", declared Jesus (Jn 14:6). Saving faith involves a recognition of the greatness and majesty of God, which makes pride a double crime and total humility entirely appropriate. It involves a recognition of the relationship of the Divine Personalities (Jn 14:10-11). "You believe in God, believe also in Me" (Jn 14:1). Faith in one cannot exist without faith in the other. Other passages indicating that faith toward God the Father must be involved in saving faith are:

Jn 5:24    Jn 12:28, 44-45    Ro 4:24    Ep 2:8    1 Tim 4:10    Tit 3:4-7  
He 6:1    1 Pe 1:17, 21    1 Jn 4:14-16    1 Jn 5:10-11

- (3) Saving faith must be directed toward the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, as true Deity who became incarnated into human flesh by means of the virgin birth for the purpose of revealing the Godhead and suffering unto death as "the Saviour of the world". Many passages make it clear that we must receive the Lord Jesus for all that He is said to be or we do not receive Him at all. We may group passages directing faith toward Christ as follows:

- (a) Those passages stressing the whole advent and saviourhood of Christ:

Jn 7:37-39    Jn 11:25-26    Acts 11:17    Ro 3:22    Ga 2:19-20    Ga 3:22, 26  
1 Tim 1:16    1 Jn 5:13

- (b) Those passages stressing the Deity and Lordship of Christ:

Jn 1:1    Jn 3:15, 16, 18, 36    Jn 6:40, 46-47    Jn 6:69  
Jn 8:23-24    Jn 11:27    Jn 20:31    Acts 8:37  
Acts 16:31    Acts 20:21    Ro 10:9    Tit 2:13  
1 Jn 3:23

Tit 2:13 ("the great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ")

- (c) Those passages emphasizing Christ as Saviour:

Jn 1:12, 14    Jn 4:42    Jn 14:1    Ro 3:26    Tit 3:6

3. More specifically, saving faith must be directed to "the Gospel" or the atoning death of Christ:

Mk 1:14-15    Jn 6:50-58    Acts 15:7    Ro 1:16    Ro 3:24-25  
Ro 10:16-17    1 Co 1:23-24    1 Co 15:1-4    Phil 1:27    2 Th 1:8  
2 Th 2:14

4. The resurrection, ascension, and present glory of the incarnated Christ is set forth as a necessary object of saving faith:

Lk 24:39-41                      Jn 20:26-29    Acts 5:31    Ro 4:24-25    Ro 10:9  
 1 Co 15:4, 12, 14, 17    Phil 2:9-11    1 Th 4:14    1 Pe 1:21

## Climax of Faith

### Why is a climax of faith necessary to salvation?

The New Testament sets forth salvation as the outstanding climactic experience of our entire lives. The strongest contrasts from our daily observations are used to set forth this instantaneous transformation. Man is to pass from spiritual death to spiritual life, from alienation from God to fellowship with God, from darkness to light, from disobedience to obedience, from supreme self-love to virtuous love, from loving the world to loving God, from a corrupt tree to a good tree, from a state of lawlessness to loving conformity to God's reasonable requirements. Nothing except a profound climax could introduce such a revolutionary change.

1. Every benefactor offering special privileges or blessings requires ratification on the part of the recipient, indicating that the offer has been accepted. God in this dispensation of special grace has issued "*glad tidings*" to whosoever will come. This calls for a formal acceptance on the basis of God's conditions.
2. God is no respecter of persons and therefore there must be an opportunity given for man's response or reaction, which God can point to as the reason why special favours and blessings are granted to some and not to others.
3. The forgiveness of sins and the inner transformation of the repentant sinner is a climax and requires a climax to initiate it. "*You have in obedience to the truth purified your souls*" (1 Pe 1:22).
4. Man needs the opportunity to require him to take climactic action to terminate the life of selfishness or the "*old man*" and emerge into "*the new man*" of virtuous love. Much persuasion and consideration enters into man's capitulation to Christ, but when man finally yields it is a sudden experience. It is described as a crucifixion "*together with Christ*" and is an unlovely struggling death to the self-life. "*The old man must be scratched to death with briars and thorns*" said a saintly writer.
5. In this era of the grace of God, God is proposing to institute a new method of control in the lives of those who submit to His grace. God proposes to bring redeemed men into such an intimate relationship to the resurrected Christ in their inner lives that such will no longer need to be controlled or constrained by law or rules of action. A regulation of life to be substituted for a regulation of law. Such a new and vital relationship requires a means of union. "*THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH*" (Ro 1:17). The beginning of this life of faith involves a climax, when man swings open the door of his innermost being to the heavenly guest who has been seeking admission. Whereupon the Saviour says "*I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me*" (Re 3:20).

## Climax of Faith Now

### Has a climax of faith always been required and is it now required as a condition of salvation and reconciliation to God?

There has been a great enlargement in the scope of faith as God's revelations to man have increased, but there has been no change in the requirement of faith as a condition of salvation. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah are said to have *"All... died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth"* (He 11:13). *"Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad"* (Jn 8:56). *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me"* (Jn 5:46), said the Saviour, *"As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you"* (1 Pe 1:10-12). Faith always has been and always will be the meeting place between a loving and forgiving God and repentant sinners, as testified to in the following representative passages:

1. Old Testament passages set forth the requirement of faith under the old Covenant.

(a) With their system of animal sacrifices, faith was more external in its manifestations and therefore is often implied in the command to bring certain sacrifices at certain times. It was not enough to believe in animal sacrifices they had to be actually brought in the prescribed way as a fulfilment of faith: Ge 4:4, 8:20, 12:7-8, Le 4:1-6, 35, 16:6, 15-16, 6:6-7.

(b) Words used to describe the climax of saving faith and continued trust in God:

i. To believe or to trust - Properly to stay, to sustain, to build up or support; thus to lean upon, to build upon, to trust, to confide in, to believe upon, to become sure or certain:

Ge 15:6 Ex 14:31 Nu 14:11 Dt 9:23 2 Chr 20:20  
Ps 19:7 Ps 78:21:22 Ps 111:7 Is 28:16 Is 43:10  
Is 53:1 Jon 3:5

ii. To trust or to confide - To confide in anyone, to set one's hope and confidence upon anyone; to be secure, to fear nothing for one's self:

Ps 9:10 Ps 13:5 Ps 33:21 Ps 37:3, 5 Ps 112:7  
Ps 143:8 Prov 3:5 Is 12:2 Is 26:3-4 Is 50:10  
Jer 17:7-8

iii. To trust or to take refuge - Properly to flee for protection, to take refuge; hence to trust in someone:

Ps 2:12 Ps 18:2 Ps 31:1 Ps 57:1-2 Ps 71:1  
Is 57:13 Nah 1:7

iv. To rest or to stay upon - To prop, to lean upon to place or lay something upon anything, so that it may rest upon and be supported by it; to lay the hand upon anything so as to lean upon the hand; to uphold, to sustain, to aid:

Le 1:2-5 Le 4:4, 15 2 Chr 32:8 Ps 37:17, 24  
Ps 51:12 Ps 112:8 Ps 119:116 Is 26:3 Is 48:2

2. New Testament passages set forth the requirement of faith with greater definiteness and frequency. *“God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe”* (2 Co 1:21).
- (a) To believe - To believe a person, or a statement made by a person, to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit or place confidence in, to rely upon, to cast one’s self upon something or someone as stable and trustworthy, to trust in or commit one’s life to: Mk 1:15, Jn 3:15, 16, 36, 7:38-39, Acts 10:43, 1 Pe 1:8, 1 Jn 5:10. The passive voice is used in the following, where faithful men have been entrusted by God with the Scriptures and the Gospel: Ro 3:2 (*“committed”*), 1 Co 9:17, Ga 2:7, 1 Th 2:4, 1 Tim 1:11, Tit 1:3.
  - (b) Faith - Belief, firm persuasion or conviction of the truth of anything, generally of the leaning of the entire personality upon God or Christ in absolute trust and confidence: Acts 15:9, Ro 3:25, 5:1, Phil 3:9, He 11:1.
  - (c) To receive - To take, take with the hand, lay hold of any person or thing in order to use, to admit, receive a person, give him access to one’s self: Jn 1:12. See Re 3:20 for what is meant by receiving Christ.
  - (d) To receive to one’s self - To take or join to one’s self, admit, acknowledge, receive something transmitted, to receive with the mind, properly, to take to one’s side: Jn 1:11, 1 Co 15:1, Col 2:6, 1 Th 2:13, Jn 14:3.
  - (e) To trust or be persuaded - To persuade or urge, apply persuasion, seek to persuade, to be persuaded, to trust, have confidence, be confident: Acts 17:4, 28:23-24, 2 Co 1:9, He 2:13, Acts 18:4, 19:8, 26, 26:28.
  - (f) To obey - To hearken to a command, be obedient unto, submit to, give ear to, listen to, render submissive acceptance from a preposition, under, and a verb, to hear: Acts 6:7, Ro 6:17, 10:16, 2 Th 1:8, He 5:9.
  - (g) Obedience - As above: Ro 1:5, 6:16 (compare with 10:10), 16:26, 1 Pe 1:22.
  - (h) To trust or hope - To direct hope towards something or someone, hopefully to trust in, to repose hope and confidence in: Mt 12:21, Ro 15:12, 1 Tim 4:10, 5:5, 6:17, 1 Pe 3:5.
  - (i) Trust or hope - Expectation of good, trust, confidence: Ro 8:24, 12:12, 1 Pe 1:21.
  - (j) To eat - In a spiritual sense of partaking intimately: Jn 6:33, 35, 48, 50-51, 58, 6:53-57 (referring more particularly to Christ’s essential life and sufferings).

## What is not saving faith?

1. Saving Faith is not merely an intellectual state which professes belief in the facts of the Gospel and of the Bible.
2. It is not to believe that one is saved. This is to believe the result before the actual event.



3. It is not a self-energized and labourious effort to reach out into the unknown and “dare to believe”. As we shall see, saving faith is a total committal of will to the sufferings of Christ as made real by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is a taking action on what we clearly perceive in our minds.
4. It is not a partial commitment of some sort that does not involve the whole life.
5. It is not a so-called receiving Jesus as Saviour and not as Lord, or a supposed optional discipleship. We either receive the Lord in all His august majesty as Lord and Saviour or we do not. A partial reception is impossible.
6. It is not merely an emotional climax brought about by fear of punishment and o hell.

## What is saving faith?

Saving faith is an intelligent committal of ourselves to the atoning death of Christ as the only means of forgiveness of past sins. It is an act of will upon an enlightened intelligence of all that is involved, with a deep realization of our guilt and our absolute dependence upon the mercy of God through the sufferings of Christ which we are permitted to have a personal interest in. It is a believing with the whole heart, the very centre of our personalities: Ro 10:9-10, 6:17. It is a firm belief in the testimony of the Word of God and in the impartial love of God, that the atoning death of Christ was made equally for all men, with no qualifications whatever. Therefore each one of us as individuals may enter into something that was actually made for us:

Is 53:6   Jn 1:29   Jn 3:17   Jn 6:51   2 Co 5:14-15   1 Tim 2:3-6  
He 2:9   1 Jn 2:1-2

Also see:

Is 1:18   Is 45:22   Is 55:1   Eze 18:30-32   Mt 23:37   Mk 16:15  
Acts 10:34-35   Ro 2:11   Re 3:20

Repentant sinners are saved by a full committal of will, or by faith in the fact that the Lord Jesus has died or sacrificed His holy and sinless life that they might be forgiven of the sins upon their darkened consciences. *“Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”* (He 9:22). The repentant sinner accepts this terrifying necessity, with a broken and contrite heart, and experiences in actuality the power of the Cross through identification with Christ, who has *“... been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”* (He 9:26). Unto us who are being saved, *“it is the power of God”*, wrote the Apostle Paul (1 Co 1:18). Men are not saved by believing in certain theories or mental deductions which they have learned, but by totally committing themselves to the absolute necessity and accomplished fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered unto death that their very sins might be forgiven.

## Climax of Faith: How and When

### How and when does the climax of saving faith actually occur?

Saving faith will become a glorious vital experience in our innermost consciousness when God the Father is so convinced of the sincerity of our repentance that He gives us over to be intimately exposed to the atoning death of His blessed Son (Jn 6:37). *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him"* said the Lord Jesus (Jn 6:44). *"It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD'. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me"* (Jn 6:45). The Father, then, is active in the crisis of saving faith and draws us into a consciousness of the sufferings of the Son.

Saving faith is *"not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"* (Ep 2:8), in the sense that our minds must have vividly portrayed before them an object for faith to commit itself to before it can act. Saving faith is always our own act, a total committal or trust in the sufferings of Christ as our only hope of obtaining the forgiveness of the dreadful guilt of our sin. But faith cannot act without a full persuasion of the reality of its object. Faith is induced, not self-generated. *"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit"* (1 Co 12:3). Saving faith is not a reaching out into the thin air of our imagination and "daring to believe" upon what we think may be true. It is not to "try Christ" to see if there is any reality to salvation. It is rather to be so overwhelmingly convinced of the certainty of the sufferings of Christ for our sins that we yield up our wills in total to be forgiven and transformed through God's great and solemn remedy. *"And He was saying, For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father"* (Jn 6:65). When we allow the Holy Spirit to relive the cross of Christ before our minds until our own sin breaks down our hearts completely as it did the Saviour's, then will be inspired within us the look of faith out of desperation, even as many of the dying Israelites did to the serpent of brass (Nu 21:7-9, Jn 3:14-15, 12:32).

# A Missing Link to Mental Health

By O. Hobart Mowrer

*“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?” Romans 6:16.*

*Mr. Mowrer is a University of Illinois research psychologist who has written extensively on the failure of religion and psychiatry to deal with mental and emotional disturbances.*

Today it is widely recognized that in former times the problems of psychiatry [which literally means the care or cure of souls] were handled largely within the sphere of religion. And the indications are that during the first few centuries of the Christian era the church was extraordinarily competent in this regard. Religious “congregations” then, weren’t the large and relatively impersonal masses of people which today make up the membership of so many of our churches.

Instead, they were little bands or groups (sometimes known as “house churches”) whose members knew each other intimately and who deeply shared their life experiences.

Today we are finding that the essence of psycho pathology lies in the fact that the afflicted person is socially alienated, out of community, estranged. Characteristically, and quite understandably, he is uncomfortable with and afraid of people, and the tendency to withdraw from human contact is an almost universal “symptom”.

In early Christian times, such wayward or “lost” souls were encouraged to join a little community or group of persons who called themselves not Christians but simply “*People of the Way*”. And this “*Way*” was specifically designed to lead the lost and estranged back into authentic, fulfilling human existence. This was the essence of “*salvation*” healing.

## **First, Exomolosis**

The early Christians understood all this well. And the first step in the restoration of the wayward was a procedure known as exomolosis, namely, a deep, thorough, unreserved form of self-disclosure, perhaps first to one or two individuals and then to a small group. After this, the individual placed himself “*under the judgment*” of the group.

The group responded to his confession of past wrongdoing with love and compassion, rejoicing at his newfound honesty and courage.

But “*forgiveness*” was not automatic. The individual depending upon the nature and extent of his misdeeds, was expected to make restitution, do penance. And when this was accomplished the person’s self-respect returned, his apprehension and fear vanished, and he was restored to community, healed.

But this powerful and effective form of “psychiatry” as to undergo a strange fate. In 325 the Roman Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicaea and there made the Christians a remarkable offer. If they would give him a consistent, monolithic description of their faith

and functions, he would not only end the persecution in which he and his predecessors had engaged; he would make Christianity the state religion [and thus, hopefully, stop the impending disintegration of the Roman Empire].

Understandably, the church fathers who assembled at Nicaea accepted this proposal. But this action was disastrous. The church now had to be popular; had to have a universal appeal, with the result that "salvation" became progressively easier and less and less genuinely effective.

### **Lead to Revolution**

By the 16th century, the church had, in this way, so far lost its original power and purpose that a revolution took place, the so-called Protestant Reformation.

The result was that the church now became even less effective in dealing with sick souls it had previously been. The "insane" were said to be possessed of the devil and were not uncommonly beaten, thrown into prison, and otherwise abused.

What is sometimes called the First Psychiatric Revolution involved a reclassification of the psychically disabled. They no longer were regarded as evil but as ill. Their abode changed from dungeons, to hospitals, and instead of being punished they were to be helped, treated. Despite abundant good intentions, this movement also was unsuccessful.

The Second Psychiatric Revolution was introduced, around the turn of the last century (1900), by Sigmund Freud. He at long last gave psychiatry a theory, and the attendant method of treatment he called psychoanalysis.

The "sick" person, he thought, had repressed some of his "instincts", notably those of sex and aggression. And the cure consisted of helping him undo these repressions and learn to be freer, more expressive. But now, after half a century of energetic application of this approach, the situation is still critical; and many believe that we are today caught up in a third revolution.

This is variously called social psychiatry, community mental health. or group therapy. But, in any case, the underlying assumption is that people get into emotional difficulties because they have been deviant and dishonest, in and out of community.

The language which is thus being used is obviously different from that of the early Christians (who spoke of having been lost and then found, dead and brought to life, etc.), but the underlying principles and operations are strikingly similar. And if the church, by proceeding along these lines, was once effective, there is reason to believe that modern psychology and psychiatry can also be. Here, interestingly, science and religion seem to be coalescing.

And when conceived in this way the objectives of religion become virtually identical with those of social psychiatry and the group therapy. Seen in historical perspective, the problem of personality disorder, which for a long time has been dogged by confusion and failure, is once again being approached in a way which justifies at least guarded optimism and hope.

*The above article from The Chicago Tribune, 12-27-71, is a very valuable summary of a relatively recent development in the realm of research psychology, called REALITY THERAPY. It appears that this remarkable research trend has been awakened by observing the failure of the cover-up type of psychology that has been practised during this century and the beneficial results that have followed*

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*when persons were dealt with as morally responsible beings. The psychological success of the Early Church is recorded in history and this appears to have led inquiry as to the secret of this achievement. This section of our studies has insisted that reconciliation to God must involve a total return to truth and a humble confession of guilt, with no reservations whatever. It is most refreshing to observe this secular confirmation.*



## Transformation or purification and renewal of our whole inner being

- *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:3).*
- *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).*
- *“He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9).*
- *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day” (Jn 6:44).*
- *“By the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Tit 3:5).*
- *“Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ” (Ep 2:5).*
- *“The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Ro 5:5).*

God endowed man's constitution with profound abilities and reactions to enable him to achieve great heights of comprehension and moral character in the imitation of his Creator. Just as virtuous actions would deposit uplifting characteristics in the inner personality, so sinful indulgences would degrade our inner beings and bring about disturbing agitations. *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts. . . and defile the man”*, declared the Saviour (Mk 7:21-23). A *“hardness and impenitent heart”* (Ro 2:15) becomes entrenched with each persistent action. A mighty tyrant is developed in the emotional life. *“Fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul”* (1 Pe 2:11). *“The sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death”* (Ro 7:5). Men are *“enslaved to various lusts and pleasures”* (Tit 3:3), *“indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind”* (Ep 2:3). They have become *“unholy and profane”* (1 Tim 1:9). There is a *“filthiness of the flesh and spirit”* (1 Co 7:1). God has had to give man up to *“uncleanness”* (Ro 1:24). *“Their mind and conscience is defiled”* so that *“nothing (is) pure”* (Tit 1:15). *“Seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron”* (1 Tim 4:2). Man's heart condemns him so that he cannot have *“confidence toward God”* (1 Jn 3:20-21). Man is in a state of *“darkness”* (Ep 5:8), is

*“dead in... sins” (Col 2:13), “being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart” (Ep 4:18). “The wicked are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked” (Is 57:20-21).*

God in great mercy has made plans to bring about a full reconciliation or restoration of repentant sinners by transforming their whole inner personalities from the devastations of sin so that they can be admitted back into the circle of loving fellowship that the Godhead experience together (Jn 17:21-23). Man does not need any new faculties or abilities to prepare him for such profound relationships, but needs a supernatural transformation from the moral chaos into which he has brought himself and an admittance back into a consciousness of the Divine life.

In describing this wonderful transformation, the Bible uses various analogies or comparisons with things that we have some knowledge of in its endeavour to enlighten our understanding. It is essential in understanding analogies that we do not press their interpretation too far, otherwise we are apt to miss the central point that is being stressed and go off into erroneous details. There is generally one feature of a particular truth that is being elucidated by an analogy. We must seek this out for our own enlightenment and then return to the main channel of truth with this added concept.

## God’s Long-Range Plans

**The Godhead made long-range plans to bring about the profound blessings that we are privileged to partake of in this “era of the grace of God” (Ep 3:2).**

1. Man cannot be regenerated or controlled by sheer force or by Divine omnipotence but only by the application of appropriate means. Regeneration is a moral change in which the subject himself also has an active part. Therefore some means must be brought into existence that both God and man can use in this complete inner renovation of personality and also in sustaining spiritual life.
2. The blessed atonement of Christ has become the means used by the Holy Spirit, in response to our faith, to purify our innermost being as we repent and induce us to live a new spiritual life in victory over sin. The advent and sufferings of Christ now accomplishes what the prefigured types could not (He 9:24-26, 10:1-4, 9-14).
3. A chain of blessed prophecies were given to portray the exceedingly great blessings of Divine relationships that have now come to be bestowed through the agency of the Holy Spirit:

1 Pe 1:10-12	Nu 11:29	Nu 11: 24-29	Is 11:1-4	Is 61:1-3
Is 55:1-3	Joel 2:28-29	Lk 1:67-68	Lk 1:76-79	Lk 2:25-32
Mt 3:11-12	Lk 3:21-22	Lk 4:18-19	Jn 4:13-14	Jn 7:37-39
Lk 11:13	Jn 1:27, 33	Jn 14:15-17	Jn 14:25-26	Jn 15:26
Jn 16:7-15	Jn 20:19-22	Mk 16:14-18	Lk 24:44-49	Acts 1:3-8



#### 4. These blessed prophecies were fulfilled:

- (a) To Christ's disciples who were either Jews or Jewish proselytes on that first Day of Pentecost after His ascension: Acts 2:1-18, 33, 37-39.
- (b) Upon Gentiles seeking the face of God in repentance apart from Judaism some ten years later: Acts 10:1-11:18. This was a true turning point in God's dealing with repentant sinners, Acts 11:18 indicating this change.
- (c) Upon the Samaritans who turned to God at the preaching of Philip a few years before, a less important fulfilment: Acts 8:5-17.

#### 5. These profound promises involved the formation of a new organism called "the Church" (or called-out ones from the world), in which the life of the risen Christ was to become a living reality through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit (Mt 16:18, Acts 20:28, Ep 1:22, 5:25).

- (a) This intimate Divine relationship with repentant sinners is called a "*mystery*" (a secret or hidden thing) and was revealed particularly through the Apostle Paul: Ro 16:25-26, Ep 3:3-5, Col 1:26-27, 2:2.
- (b) The unity of the members of our physical body as related to our mind is used to illustrate the oneness of spiritual life which Christ purposes to live within us through the Holy Spirit, believers being called "*the body of Christ*":

Ep 1:22-23    Ro 12:5    1 Co 10:17    1 Co 12:13, 27    Ep 3:6    Ep 4:4  
 Ep 5:23    Ep 4:29-30    Col 1:18    Col 3:15

also see 1 Co 6:15, 17.

- (c) This intimate relation with Christ through the gift of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit is said to be the blessed fulfilment of "*the promise*": Lk 24:49, Acts 1:4, Ga 3:14, 22, Ep 1:13, 3:6, He 8:6, 2 Pe 1:4.
- (d) The Godhead is said to live or dwell within the very beings of believers through the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:17, Ro 8:9, Col 1:27, 1 Jn 4:4), who have replaced the Old Testament Temple as God's dwelling-place (1 Co 3:9, 6:19-20, Ep 2:22) and the priesthood (1 Pe 2:5, 9, Re 1:6).
- (e) Believers as indwelt by the Holy Spirit are in happy submission to and are owned by God:

Lk 17:21    1 Co 6:19-20    Ga 5:24    Ep 1:14    Ep 5:25-27    Col 1:13  
 Tit 2:14    1 Pe 2:9

- (f) The frequent use of the word "*grace*" as characterizing "*the age of the grace of God*" is to be viewed as the greatest condescension of the Godhead to bless totally-undeserving mankind since the fall, and not in any sense of leniency or as compromise with the unchanging demands of repentance and submission as the first condition of salvation:

Lk 13:3, 5    Acts 17:30    Acts 20:21, 24    Acts 26:19-20    Ro 6:14  
 Ep 2:5, 8    1 Pe 5:5

## This Blessed Transformation

**This blessed transformation of heart and life from the defilement of sin (Tit 1:15) to the glorious deliverance from sin (Jn 8:36, Ga 5:1) is described in the New Testament by many profound words and analogies:**

1. The contrasting words of physical death and life are applied to the revolutionary moral change in passing from a self-centered existence, with all its emotional chaos and frustrations, called death, to a completely new satisfying state of love in a partaking of the life of the Godhead, called life:
  - (a) Living a life that is real and genuine, an emergence from “*death*” (Ep 2:1, 5, Col 2:13, Ep 4:18, “*alienated from the life of God*”):
 

Jn 4:14   Acts 11:18   Ro 6:4   Ro 8:6   Col 3:3-4   1 Jn 5:11-12  
 Jn 4:10   Jn 7:38   Ga 2:20   1 Jn 4:9
  - (b) Pass or go over from one place to another: Jn 5:24 (out of from), 1 Jn 3:14.
  - (c) Make alive, give life, cause to live: Jn 6:63, 2 Co 3:6.
  - (d) Make alive together with: Ep 2:5, Col 2:13.
  - (e) Raise up together Ep 2:6, Col 2:12, 3:1.
  - (f) Transformed or changed into another form: Ro 12:2, 2 Co 3:18, Mt 17:2 (transfigured, the same word used of Christ).
  - (g) Partaker, sharer or partner: 2 Pe 1:4, Lk 5:10 (of James and John),
2. Words used of parenthood and of the bringing of new life into existence, applied to the radical newness of spiritual transformation and the beginning of a new life in relation to God:
  - (a) Beget or be born, to be begotten, to bear, bring forth, or give birth to, to be a parent to anyone, to impart or induce spiritual life:
 

Jn 1:13   Jn 3:3, 5, 6, 7, 8   1 Co 4:15   Phile 10   1 Jn 2:29  
 1 Jn 3:9   1 Jn 4:7   1 Jn 5:1, 4, 18   1 Jn 4,18
  - (b) The preposition rendered “*out of from*” occurs without the above verb, but with the same meanings: 1 Jn 3:10, 4:6, 13, 5:19.
  - (c) Bring forth, give birth to, or generate by spiritual birth: Jas 1:18. Regeneration, a new birth or a re-birth, a re-creation or a moral renovation, a restoration or a bringing back again of a former state or condition: Tit 3:5.
  - (d) Beget again or be born again, a preposition back or again prefixed to the above verb to beget: 1 Pe 1:3, 23.
  - (e) Newborn or just born, a prefix “*just now*”: 1 Pe 2:2.

- (f) Create, transform or completely change, properly to make habitable or reduce from a state of disorder and wildness, thus to create, call into being (as Col 1:16, Re 4:11, 10:6), frame, form or shape: Ep 2:10, 4:24.
- (g) Creation or creature (the noun from above), a new spiritual creation, a renovated creature, a creature new in kind, character or mode, used for creation (Ro 1:20, 8:22, 39, Re 3:14): 2 Co 5:17, Ga 6:15.
- (h) Workmanship or work, that which has been made: Ep 2:10.
3. Words for physical eating and drinking to sustain and energize physical life is applied to a spiritual partaking of the atonement of Christ and the life-giving energy of God: Jn 6:48, 50, 51, 6:54, 56, 57, 58 (another verb, present tenses); Jn 4:13-14, 7:37-39 (of living water); 1 Co 10:4.
4. The putting off and putting on a garment to a termination of a self-centred manner of life and the beginning of an entirely different life of devotion to God and to our fellow men: Ep 4:22-24, Col 3:9-10, Ro 13:14.
5. Words for darkness and light applied to the contrasting moral character of a life lived for one's self with a life lived for God and our fellow men:
- Mt 6:22-23   Jn 3:19-21   Jn 8:12   2 Co 6:14   Ep 5:8   1 Pe 2:9  
1 Jn 1:5-7
6. Words for love, a deliverance from a state of self-centeredness into a state of good-will or devotion, a voluntary purpose of mind:
- (a) To love: 1 Pe 1:8, 22, 1 Jn 3:14, 1 Jn 4:7-8, 19, 1 Jn 5:1.
- (b) Love: Ro 5:5, Ga 5:22, Col 1:8, 1 Jn 2:15, 1 Jn 4:16, 1 Jn 5:3, Re 2:4.
7. Word to become, used of marriage, applied spiritually: Ro 7:4-6 (Ep 5:23-32).

## Negative Aspects

**Words and descriptions that stress the NEGATIVE ASPECTS of this glorious transformation, indicating a miraculous removal of and deliverance from the seemingly indelible defilements of sin in our innermost being and a restoration of proper moral balance:**

1. Words indicating our condition as we present ourselves for the transforming operations of the grace of God:
- (a) Defilement (several different words): Mk 7:23, 1 Co 8:7, 2 Co 7:1, Tit 1:15, Re 3:4.
- (b) Filthy (properly of filthy or dirty clothing): Re 22:11.

(c) Unrighteous, not only in conduct but in character: 1 Co 6:9, 2 Tim 2:19, Re 22:11.

(d) Uncleanliness, unchastity, lewdness, impurity:

Ro 1:24 Ga 5:19 Ep 4:19 Ep 5:3, 5 Col 3:5 2 Pe 2:10, 20

(e) Nature, our inner personality, modes of feeling and acting which by long habit has become a part of us: Ep 2:3.

2. Words associated with water and the idea of removing physical dirt from our bodies or clothing, applied figuratively to the inner removal of the stains of personality through the application of the atonement of Christ:

(a) Water used in washing or bathing, symbolizing the idea of spiritual cleansing or purification: Mt 3:11, He 10:22, Jn 3:5, Ep 5:26 (Jas 1:18).

(b) Wash or washing (several words):

Jn 13:10 Ep 5:26 Tit 3:5 He 10:22 2 Pe 2:22 Re 7:14  
Re 22:14 Acts 22:16

and 1 Co 6:11 (off or away from),

(c) Idea of white garments associated with washing: Mt 17:2 (of Christ), Re 3:4-5, 18, Re 7:13-14, Re 16:15, Re 19:8 (righteous acts of the saints).

3. A family of words meaning clean, to cleanse or make clean, applied in a spiritual sense:

Mt 5:8 Tit 1:15 Jas 1:27 Jn 15:2-3 Acts 15:9 2 Co 7:1  
1 Jn 1:7, 9 He 9:13-14 2 Tim 2:21

4. Associated words meaning pure, to make pure or cleanse: 1 Jn 3:3, 1 Pe 1:22.

5. The word fire, as having special significance of God's presence in Old Testament times, is associated with cleansing and purifying: Mt 3:11, 1 Pe 1:7, Re 3:18.

6. A family of words meaning holy, holiness, or to make holy:

Ro 12:1 1 Co 3:17 Re 22:11 1 Pe 1:15 He 12:10 1 Th 3:13  
1 Co 6:11 2 Th 2:13 1 Co 6:11 2 Tim 2:21 Ep 4:24 1 Pe 1:2

7. A family of words meaning righteous, righteousness, or to make righteous, also to declare righteousness:

Mt 5:45 1 Jn 3:7 Ro 6:18-19 Ro 14:17 2 Co 6:14 1 Pe 2:24  
1 Co 6:11 Tit 3:7 Tit 2:12 Ro 8:4 Re 22:11

8. Words for death, indicating a separation and deliverance from our old manner of life and its disturbing forces: Ro 6:6-8, Col 3:3, 1 Pe 2:24, Ga 2:20, 5:24, 6:14.

9. The word heal, to cure or make whole, applied spiritually: 1 Pe 2:24.

10. Words to loose or make free from what is binding one:

1 Jn 3:8 Re 1:5 Jn 8:36 Ro 6:18, 22 Ga 5:1 Tit 2:14

11. Words that describe vividly the net result of the cleansing and purifying operations of the Holy Spirit:

Col 1:21 Ep 5:27 2 Co 3:18 2 Pe 3:14 1 Jn 3:21 2 Tim 1:3

## Positive Aspects

**Words and descriptions that stress the POSITIVE ASPECTS of this glorious transformation, portraying the invasion of the manifested life of the Godhead to fill our cleansed and purified personalities with invigorating spiritual life and refreshing God-consciousness:**

1. Words indicating that the Holy Spirit is a special gift from the Father and the risen Lord Jesus, which repentant believers receive or partake of:

Lk 11:13 Jn 14:16 Acts 5:32 Acts 15:8 Acts 2:38 Acts 10:45  
Ga 4:6 Jn 7:39 He 6:4 Ro 8:9 1 Co 6:19

2. Words indicating that the Holy Spirit is not to be a mere addition to our personality but is to permeate our entire being and enter into all our living:

Ro 8:9, 11 Ep 3:17 Jn 14:17 1 Jn 2:27 Ro 8:15 Ga 3:28  
Ro 5:5 Jn 14:17 Ro 14:17

3. Analogies that illustrate the intimate relationship of the Holy Spirit:

- (a) Vine and branches, a partaking of the risen Christ's life: Jn 15:5.
- (b) Seal, to mark distinctively or confirm: 2 Co 1:22, Ep 1:13, 4:30.
- (c) Anoint or anointing, a raising to privilege: 2 Co 1:21, 1 Jn 2:20, 27.
- (d) Earnest, a somewhat given beforehand: 2 Co 1:22, 5:5, Ep 1:14.
- (e) Marriage relation in all sacredness: 1 Co 6:15-17.

4. The words baptize and baptism appear to represent a twofold symbolism in the New Testament. The words basically mean to dip, immerse, submerge, to cleanse or purify by dipping or submerging, to wash or make clean with water.

- (a) Baptism in water, to which Christ submitted (Mt 3:16) and instituted as a symbol of Christianity (Mt 28:19-20), also by the Holy Spirit through the apostles (Acts 2:38), was given to symbolize profound spiritual transactions that were taking place or had taken place.

- (b) Baptism in a spiritual sense refers to a most sacred and holy experience in being overwhelmed in God-consciousness: Mt 3:11, Jn 1:33, Acts 1:5, 11:16, 1 Co 12:12-13.

The word conveyed the idea of being completely permeated and overwhelmed in our innermost consciousness by a strong manifestation of His presence, or that the Holy Spirit would be liberally bestowed or poured out, upon repentant believers. This baptism in the Holy Spirit also involves the idea of “fire” (Mt 3:11). In the Old Testament, fire was associated with the idea of cleansing and purifying from sin and spiritual defilement (as Is 4:4, 6:4-7, Mal 3:2).

By using the two common illustrations of water and fire in connection with the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it appears that we have symbolized the twofold idea of a complete exposure and cleansing from all sin (Acts 15:9) and an overwhelming manifestation of God’s presence and power to deliver from the power of sin and energize for Christian service. This was the manifestation on Pentecost, where “*there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them*” (Acts 2:3).

5. Various words are used to describe the wonderful blessings of this intimate relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Christian:

- (a) Fellowship with and direct access to the presence of the Godhead:

Eph 2:18-22    2 Co 3:18    2 Co 4:6    2 Co 5:14    1 Jn 1:3    Re 3:20

- (b) Know or knowledge, to become acquainted with or come to know by direct personal experience in our consciousness, which does not depend upon mental observation or deductions as do three other Greek words for know:

Jn 7:17                      Jn 14:17, 20    Jn 17:3            Ro 15:14    2 Co 4:6  
 Phil 3:8, 10              2 Tim 2:19      2 Pe 3:18    1 Jn 2:3      1 Jn 3:24  
 1 Jn 4:6, 13, 16    1 Jn 5:13, 20

- (c) Know thoroughly or have a precise and correct knowledge grounded in personal experience or acquaintance (the above words with a preposition *upon* prefixed for emphasis):

Ro 1:28    Eph 1:17    Eph 4:13              Col 1:6              Col 3:10  
 1 Tim 2:4    He 10:26    2 Pe 1:2, 3, 8    2 Pe 2:20, 21

- (d) Renew or renewing, to renovate, restore, transform, refresh, invigorate, make new, cause to grow up anew: Ro 12:2, 2 Co 4:16, Eph 4:23, Tit 3:5, He 6:6. This renewing takes place in the mind and must be a continuous action. It is a “*newness of life*” (Ro 6:4) and a “*newness of spirit*” (Ro 7:6).

- (e) Water represented as bestowed freely and in abundance typifies the rich availability of refreshing experiences through the indwelling Holy Spirit: Jn 4:10, 14, 7:37-39, Re 7:17, 21:6, 22:1, 17. The idea is also expressed in 1 Co 12:13 (all one Spirit were given to drink).

- (f) Full or filled with the Holy Spirit is to be the constant experience of the Christian, a continuous succession of climaxes as we look in faith to the Holy Spirit for delivering and transforming power:

Acts 2:4    Acts 4:8, 31    Acts 6:3, 5, 8    Acts 7:55    Acts 9:17  
 Acts 11:24    Acts 13:9, 52    Ep 3:19    Ep 5:18    1 Jn 1:4

- (g) Power, strength, might, energy, ability or efficacy is to characterize the Christian in his personal life and service for Christ:

Lk 24:49    Acts 1:8    Acts 6:8    Ro 15:13    1 Co 2:4    1 Th 1:5

Also see Ro 1:16, 1 Co 1:18, 24, Ep 1:19, and Ro 6:4, 8:4, Ga 5:16 for the victorious spiritual walk.

- (h) Fruit, that which originates or comes from something, an effect or result, used concerning the graces of character in the life of the Christian which are continually generated by the Holy Spirit if allowed to do so: Ga 5:22-23. They are in sweet contrast to the crude "*works of the flesh*" Ga 5:19-21.
- (i) Comfort or inner reinforcement of the Holy Spirit as a Comforter or helper: Jn 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7, Acts 9:31, 2 Co 1:3-6, 7:4.
- (j) Grieve and quench represent actions which the Christian may take in opposition to the Holy Spirit only because of His intimacy and involvement in our lives: Ep 4:30, 1 Th 5:19. To grieve is to affect with sadness or sorrow, to offend. To quench is to suppress, extinguish, hinder, thwart or dampen, properly of fire or things on fire, to stifle or smother.

## Transformation of a climactic or sudden nature

**The words and analogies used, and verb tenses, overwhelmingly indicate that this grand transformation of heart and life is of a climactic or sudden nature. It is the most vital and consuming experience of our lives. Most of the verbs used are in tenses that indicate a climax, in addition to the very nature of the words.**

The verb in the Greek language has tense, mode, and voice. The main idea of tense is to define the kind of action represented. The Greek aorist tense represents always a distinct, sudden, or climactic action. The following aorist tenses, therefore, demonstrate beyond all doubt the glorious climactic nature of the transforming grace of God, which the blessed Gospel promises to repentant sinners as a vital experience in their innermost consciousness. Some Greek perfect tenses are also included, which are marked by an (\*). These also represent climactic action, including previous progress and the existence of the completed action.

1. Those verbs that describe the WHOLE climactic experience of transformation:

- (a) Saved, through washing and renewing: Tit 3:5.

- (b) Born (spiritually): Jn 1:13, 3:3, 5, 7, 1 Co 4:15, Phile 10, 1 Jn 5:1 (*"beget"*), 5:18 (*"begotten"*). Also see the following perfect tenses\*: Jn 3:6, 8, 1 Jn 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1 (*"born"* and *"begotten"*), 5:4, 5:18 (*"born"*).
  - (c) Born again or beget again (above with prefix *"again"*): 1 Pe 1:3, 23.
  - (d) Bring forth, give birth to: Jas 1:18.
  - (e) Make alive together with: Ep 2:5, Col 2:13.
  - (f) Created (transformed or completely changed): Ep 2:10.
  - (g) Put off (the old manner of life) and put on the new: Ep 4:22-24.
  - (h) Know thoroughly by experience: Col 1:16, 2 Pe 2:21\*.
  - (i) Open the (*"heart"*) door, whereupon Christ spiritually manifests Himself: Re 3:20.
  - (j) Passed out of from death into life: Jn 5:24\*.
2. Those verbs that stress the **NEGATIVE ASPECTS** of the climactic experience of transformation:
- (a) Died: Col 3:3, Ro 6:7 (to sin), 6:8 (with Christ).
  - (b) Crucified (in a spiritual resemblance): Ro 6:6 (*"our old man"*), Ga 5:24 (*"the flesh"*), 6:14\* (*"the world"*), 2:20\* (*"I"* together with).
  - (c) Set you free (by Christ, *"free indeed"*): Jn 8:36.
  - (d) Loosed us (*"from our sins by his blood"*): Re 1:5.
  - (e) Washed (*"in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God"*): 1 Co 6:11.
  - (f) Cleansed: Acts 15:9 (*"their hearts by faith"*), Ep 5:26 (*"by the washing of the water by word"*). Also see kindred word *"purified"*: 1 Pe 1:22\*.
  - (g) Rendered fit or glorious: Col 1:12.
  - (h) Healed (spiritually): 1 Pe 2:24 (*"to sins having died, to righteousness we might live"*, aorist tenses, climactic).
3. Those verbs that stress the **POSITIVE ASPECTS** of the climactic experience of transformation.
- These all relate to the blessed bestowal of the promised Holy Spirit as the inner abiding Comforter, who is the special Agent of the Godhead to manifest the Divine life and power in this *"era of the grace of God"*. After cleansing or purifying, He takes up His abode in a climactic manner:
- (a) Become *"partakers (companions, partners, or sharers) of the divine nature"* 2 Pe 1:4.
  - (b) Becoming *"partakers (sharers or participators) of the Holy Spirit"*: He 6:4.
  - (c) Filled *"with the Holy Spirit"*: Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31.



- (d) Poured out: Acts 2:33, Tit 3:6 (*“shed on us abundantly”*), Acts 10:45\*, Ro 5:5\* (*“the love of God. . . in our hearts by the Holy Spirit”*).
- (e) Fell on (of the Holy Spirit upon a group of Gentiles): Acts 10:44, 11:15.
- (f) Did give (the Holy Spirit): Acts 5:32, 15:8, Ro 5:5 (*“given to us”*).
- (g) Sent forth (the Holy Spirit *“into your hearts”*): Ga 4:6.
- (h) Baptized (in the Holy Spirit): 1 Co 12:13.
- (i) Given to drink (of the Holy Spirit in a baptism): 1 Co 12:13.
- (j) Received (the Holy Spirit): Acts 10:47, Ro 8:15.
- (k) Anointed (by the Holy Spirit, 1 Jn 2:27): 2 Co 1:21.
- (l) Sealed (the Holy Spirit’s presence is the seal): 2 Co 1:22.
- (m) Endued with power (the promised coming of the Holy Spirit): Lk 24:49.
- (n) Raised up together (with Christ to partake of His resurrection life): Col 3:1.
- (o) Sanctified (or made holy by the vital life of the Holy Spirit): 1 Co 6:11 (follows *“washed”*), Ep 5:26 (follows *“having cleansed”*, an aorist participle auxiliary to the main verb).

## Evidence of a Blessed Transformation

**The evidence that this blessed transformation has taken place is an overwhelming consciousness that the loving disposition of the Godhead has moved into our innermost beings with overflowing joy (Ro 5:5) and changed our entire outlook and purpose in life (Phil 1:20-21).** The atoning love of Christ our Saviour has exposed and conquered our hearts by compassionate forgiveness (Ga 2:20), so that we now serve our heavenly Father and our fellow men *“in newness of spirit”* (Ro 7:6):

1. There is a direct witness of the Holy Spirit with our spirit, the highest part of our being where God-consciousness resides, that we have in fact been reconciled to God:

Acts 15:8    Ro 8:15-16    1 Co 12:13    Ga 4:4-6    1 Jn 5:10    Re 3:20

2. There is a fullness of warm-hearted love to God and to our fellow men in happy submission to the guidance and deliverance of the Holy Spirit, our new-found Companion and Comforter:

Jn 13:35    Ro 5:5        Ro 6:22    Ro 9:1-3    1 Co 6:20    1 Co 10:17  
 1 Co 12:3    1 Co 16:22    2 Co 3:18    Ga 5:22-23    1 Jn 4:7    1 Jn 5:1  
 Re 2:4

3. The Holy Spirit may choose to manifest His presence and His approval of our full reconciliation by bestowing miraculous gifts of grace for various purposes, as was often true in the introduction and establishment of the early Church:

Mk 16:17-20 Acts 2:4, 8, 11 Acts 8:17-18 Acts 10:45-47 Acts 19:6  
1 Co 12:11

4. There cannot but be a deep inner consciousness that we have been cleansed from the defilement of all sin and delivered from its power, since *“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin”* and the renewing of the Holy Spirit permeates into the deep recesses of the mind and heart:

Jn 8:34, 36 1 Co 6:11 2 Co 5:17 2 Th 2:13 He 6:4-5 He 13:12  
1 Pe 2:3 1 Jn 3:21

5. Victory over sin through the indwelling Holy Spirit is the predominant characteristic of daily life, lapses into periods of selfish indulgence being the exception:

Ro 6:2, 4, 14 Ro 7:6 Ro 8:4, 14 Ro 8:26-27 2 Co 4:16  
Ga 5:16-18, 25 Jn 2:12-14 Jn 3:4-10 1 Jn 5:3-5

6. There is a greatly-enlarged knowledge of the nature and Being of God, and the whole realm of truth:

Jn 17:3 Ro 15:14 1 Co 2:12 Phil 3:7-11 Col 1:6 1 Th 5:5  
2 Pe 1:2 2 Pe 3:18 1 Jn 2:20, 21, 27 1 Jn 5:20

7. The coming of the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts always brings great rejoicing, which is only a beginning of serene times of worship and great blessing in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The cares of life are cast into oblivion and we are *“anxious for nothing”* in overwhelming eternal consciousness. A very vigorous word is used, to rejoice exceedingly or be glad with exceeding joy, properly meaning to jump or leap for joy. This word was used by our blessed Lord as He pondered the mercy of the Father in blessing men (Lk 10:21). He looked beyond His burdens to the joy of accomplishing His mission (He 12:2). Another word used means full assurance, firm persuasion, or the most certain confidence. Even this did not express what took place in Thessalonika, so the Apostle Paul had to prefix another superlative *“much”*. Such is the riches of our glorious salvation: Acts 16:34 (*“rejoiced exceedingly”*), Ro 14:17 (a state of *“righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”*), Ep 5:18-20 (*“singing and psalming in your heart to the Lord”*), Col 3:16 (similarly), 1 Th 1:5-6 (*“much full-assurance”*), 1 Pe 1:6-8 (*“you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory”*).

## The Three Moral Agents

**This blessed moral transformation of heart and life takes place through the co-operative effort of three free moral agents The Holy Spirit, the servant of Christ, and the subject being transformed. All agents employ the one instrument the Word of God, particularly as it presents the record of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and His accomplished sufferings for the sins of the world:**

1. **The Holy Spirit**, as the delegated Agent of the Godhead, takes the initiative to transform the whole personality of the repentant sinner through the application of the atoning sufferings of Christ and the gift of His energizing presence. The Holy Spirit is said:
  - (a) To give spiritual birth: Jn 1:13, 3:3-8, 1 Jn 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18. The Father is also said to be involved (Jas 1:18, 1 Pe 1:3) and also the Son (1 Jn 2:29).
  - (b) To create or make alive through Christ: 2 Co 5:17, Ep 2:5, 10.
  - (c) To cleanse: Acts 15:9, Ep 5:26, Tit 2:14, 1 Jn 1:7, 9.
  - (d) Washing of regeneration: Tit 3:5.
  - (e) To sanctify: Jn 17:17, 1 Co 6:11, Ep 5:26, Re 22:11.
  - (f) To transform: Ro 12:2, 2 Co 3:18 (same word concerning Christ, Mt 17:2).
  - (g) To be renewed: Ep 4:23 (*"in the spirit of your mind"*).
  - (h) Renewing: Ro 12:2 (*"of the mind"*), Tit 3:5 (*"of the Holy Spirit"*).
  
2. **The servant of God** is represented as having a vital active part in the transformation of a soul by the use of the same word, to beget, and the same climactic tense as is used concerning the agency of the Holy Spirit. The human agent is regarded as a spiritual parent because:
  - Of a voluntary loving sacrificial life manifesting the compassion of Christ:
 

Jn 15:8      Acts 20:33-35    1 Co 4:9-13    1 Co 9:19-23  
 1 Co 10:33    2 Co 12:14-15    1 Th 2:6-9    2 Th 3:8-9
  - Of a faithful witness to the truth of the Gospel:
 

Acts 1:8      Acts 8:4            Ro 1:15-16    Ro 10:15  
 1 Co 15:1-4    1 Th 2:3-4, 13
  - Of earnest Spirit anointed persuasion:
 

Acts 6:10      Acts 18:4    Acts 26:18, 24, 28    1 Co 2:1-5  
 2 Tim 4:1-2    Jude 3
  - And of persisting on in a great burden of prayer and spiritual travail in faith for specific souls (Jn 15:5, Ro 9:1-3, 2 Co 11:28, Ga 4:19, Ep 3:14-19, Mt 17:19-21). Such intense agency of concern and prayer enables the Holy Spirit to do more for souls without being accused of partiality.
  - (a) To the Corinthians the Apostle Paul wrote: *"In Christ Jesus through the glad tidings (or the Gospel) I myself did beget you (did give birth to you, did bring you forth, or did impart spiritual life unto you). I am exhorting you, therefore, be imitators of me"* (1 Co 4:15-16).
  - (b) To Philemon he wrote: *"I am beseeching you concerning my child (or son-literally, the of me child, or the child of mine), whom I did beget in the bonds, Onesimus"* (Phile 10).

3. **The subject himself** is an agent in his own transformation of heart and life by actively applying in absolute faith and trust the sufferings of Christ, as made real by the Holy Spirit, to his needy soul. He must:
- (a) Open the door of his needy heart to the resurrected Christ, who is humbly and gently knocking: Re 3:20. Man must awake from spiritual “*sleep*” (Ep 5:14).
  - (b) Apply “*eye salve*” to his dull spiritual vision which he has neglected so long in his resistance to all moral enlightenment surrounding him: Re 3:18.
  - (c) Grant access to the implanted Word of God: Jas 1:21.
  - (d) “*Wash*” himself: 1 Co 6:11, Re 7:14, 22:14.
  - (e) Purify himself: Jas 4:8, 1 Pe 1:22, 1 Jn 3:3 (at the provided remedy).
  - (f) Cleanse himself: 2 Co 7:1.
  - (g) Be willing to pursue sanctification: He 12:14.
  - (h) “*Eat*” and “*drink*” or partake of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sufferings: Jn 6:50-51, 53-56.
  - (i) “*Put off*” the old manner of life and “*put on*” the new: Ep 4:22, 24, Col 2:11, 3:9-10, Ga 3:27.
  - (j) Consent to an unhappy “*crucifixion*” of his selfish life in order that a new happy blessed life with the risen Christ may become a reality: Ro 6:6, Ga 2:20, 5:24, 6:14.
4. The accomplished life and atoning sufferings of Christ, as recorded in the Word of God, provide the means through which the innermost being of the repentant sinner is purified and quickened to a newness of life: Jn 8:32, 36, 17:17, 1 Co 4:15, Ep 5:26 (“*washing of the water by word*”), Jas 1:18, 21, 1 Pe 1:22-23.

Thus in the transformation of the repentant sinner, the Holy Spirit illumines and applies the sufferings of Christ and bestows spiritual life; the servant of Christ is the human agent to proclaim, pray, and influence with compassionate firmness; the subject is drawn to the suffering heart of Christ in spite of painful self-disclosures and actively partakes of the blessed remedy to pass from the abyss of ugly selfishness and be “*transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son*” (Col 1:13).

**In the Love of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit**

- *“Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life” (Jude 20-21).*
- *“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love., If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love” (Jn 15:9-11).*
- *“When he (Barnabas) arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord” (Acts 11:23).*
- *“Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (1 Tim 4:16).*
- *“He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach: if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard” (Col 1:21-23).*
- *“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord: See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God” (He 12:14-17).*
- *“Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God... For we are made partakers of Christ... For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end” (He 3:12-15).*
- *“He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels” (Re 3:5).*

We have seen in previous studies that sin is a refusal to live intelligently toward God and toward our fellow men, or a refusal to regard God's welfare supremely and our fellow men's equally with our own. Sin has resulted in guilt of conscience, separation from God, bodily weakness and the toil of life, and death, after which comes judgment for sin and eternal remorse. Salvation is to

be rescued from the consequences of our sin and reconciled back into the favour and blessing of God. The conditions of this restored relationship with God are things that must take place before salvation from the solemn perils of our present life can become a certainty.

Spiritual victory or deliverance in temptation is not to be achieved as we first think. Sadly enough, we have all exercised our natural tendencies to fight temptation and overcome sin in our own strength, either because we were never taught the promises of the Gospel or because we failed to apprehend what was taught to us. This led to the gruesome experiences of defeat and frustration that the Apostle Paul recorded in Romans 7:7-24. This took place either before his conversion after his mind had perceived much truth, or after his conversion but before he himself had learned the secret that unlocks the power of God. As he looked away from himself to his glorified and loving Saviour, he experienced the relaxation of deliverance and could truly worship in the words, "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Ro 7:25).

The **first condition of salvation** we have abundantly seen to be repentance, or a turn from all rebellion of heart against the loving and intelligent will of God. It is a willingness to forsake and die out to our own selfish ways, and seek the happiness of God supremely and that of our fellow men equally. Certainly, God can never reconcile rebels to Himself. How could sinners be cleansed from sin if they insist upon continuing to defile themselves with it?

The **second condition of salvation** is the committal of faith. The repentant sinner must commit his whole case for the forgiveness of past sins to the substituted sufferings of Christ as the only possible way in which God could extend mercy consistent with His moral obligations. Thereupon there takes place the gracious pardon of past sin and the transforming grace of God, so that the renewed soul looks to God in profound gratitude and happily resolves that there shall be no more sin to cloud the horizon of his being and bring unhappiness to the Godhead and to his fellow men.

It is now affirmed that there is a **third condition of salvation** that both the Old and New Testaments insist that future salvation is conditional to the Christian who has been truly reconciled to God. As the Lord Jesus said, the restored soul is to "*do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you*" (Jn 5:14). Every possible Divine aid is promised to the Christian to keep him in a happy state of deliverance from sin. "*So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed*" said the Lord Jesus (Jn 8:36). But there are solemn possibilities of apostasy, which has called forth endless warnings in the Word of God. Although the Holy Spirit is taking the initiative and is working within the believer's heart and mind in the direction of happy obedience, it is we ourselves who must "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Phil 2:12-13). Man is still profoundly endowed with free moral agency and responsibility, which God will not violate. It is "*Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts*".

We will consider passages mostly from the New Testament, since this more specifically relates to our present situation. However, although the blessings of salvation have greatly multiplied in the present age of God's special grace, the requirements for salvation have always remained the same and always will until the end of man's earthly probation. We will present some of the many Scriptures which, it is affirmed, establish the proposition that the saints of God must continue in happy submission to their most holy faith until the end of their earthly lives if their souls are to be finally saved. The passages relating to the Christian sojourn will be grouped

under various questions relating to the proposition:

## How to continue in the love of God?

### What is meant by continuation in the love of God?

Through the blessed gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ we have been brought into the most intimate relationship of life. Transformation has reached into our innermost beings.

- God has imparted Divine life to us (2 Pe 1:4)
- In a habitation of friendship (Jn 15:14:15, Ep. 2:22)
- And absolute intimacy (1 Co 6:17, 12:12-13),
- Resulting in total voluntary ownership (1 Co 6:19-20).

With hearts full of love and gratitude our minds are overwhelmingly persuaded that we have found the true way of life for which we were created. We exclaim with Peter of old, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life*" (Jn 6:68). We can only pray, "*Lord, always give us this bread*" (Jn 6:34). This profound background of Christian experience must always be kept in mind in considering the subject of continuance in the faith. The Christian is not to be considered as persevering in something that he is not happy over and therefore is exceedingly labourious, but rather in a life that he is very much attached to and rejoices in. It is to be like the experience of the two discouraged disciples who journeyed to Emmaus, with the sadness of the crucifixion filling their hearts. They were joined by the risen Christ, who veiled His identity. At the end of the journey, the Lord revealed Himself and vanished. "*They said to one another, Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?*" (Lk 24:32).

### Obedient Submission to Intelligent Truth

To continue in the love of God is to continue in that happy state of obedient submission to intelligent truth, into which we were brought by our exposure to the tender suffering love of Christ through our repentance and faith-in "*your first love*" (Re 2:4).

Love is not a mysterious emotion which descends upon us and automatically captivates us, Love has previously been defined as a voluntary state of impartial good-will toward all moral beings, which results in a conduct according to intelligence and truth without any admixture of arbitrariness (See in Chapter 4, page 54)

Love is a willingness to be intelligent in our attitude and actions toward other moral beings. To be intelligent is to face reality or to view our relations to other moral beings as they actually exist and to do what we reasonably can, to fulfill our obligations. To live according to intelligence

is to conform our lives according to what is right and proper in our moral relations, for we will not allow ourselves to think upon those relationships of life that we are unwilling to make place for.

Love is thus to delight in the obligations that these relationships impose upon us because we are fully convinced that this is the only manner of life that is right and proper. It is to abide in *"the love of the truth"* (2 Th 2:10). It is to have pleasure in righteousness rather than in unrighteousness (2 Th 2:12).

The Godhead, by virtue of Their infinite greatness, moral character, and creator of all life, must have the supreme place in our thinking and acting. God can never accept anything less than this attitude from His creatures because anything less than this is not right. Our fellow men, by virtue of their equal importance to ourselves cannot be shunned or taken advantage of in our manner of life because this is not right.

Love, then, is to allow ourselves to be guided in our lives by an open-minded perspective that gives proper regard for all moral beings that enter our sphere of knowledge, according to their true relative worth.

*"God is love"* (1 Jn 4:8, 16) in essence of moral character, or the Godhead continually chooses to be guided in all actions by absolute intelligence of the moral worth of all moral creatures. The Godhead can accept nothing less as being right and proper in Their moral character. Perfect knowledge and unlimited ability enables God to produce perfect actions. It would be wrong for God to give approval to any moral beings who are unwilling to be guided in life by the intelligence which they possess. This intelligence is not perfect, nor in proper perspective as viewing all the facts involved, as God views it. Nor is the resulting conduct of moral creatures perfect or all that it might be. But in the kingdom of God it can never be accepted that its members shall refuse to live according to the intelligence of truth which they do possess.

The unwavering requirement of man's relation to God must be, *"YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY"* (1 Pe 1:16, Le 19:2). Or, conform your lives to your intelligence or understanding of truth as I am conforming to Mine. Have the same voluntary disposition of benevolent love that the Godhead have chosen to have. Live in *"the way of truth"* (2 Pe 2:2), even as the Lord Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* (Jn 14:6). Keep on doing *"truth"* (Jn 3:21) or walking *"in the light, as He (God) is in the light"* (1 Jn 1:17). Just as physical light reveals all objects, so moral light or true intelligence develops what is true and right in our moral relations and obligations. Truth is simply a true perspective, or a true picture in all proper proportions, of what exists. In salvation the repentant sinner is brought *"to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4), or experiences spiritual illumination of the majesty of God, of compassion and mercy through Christ, and of personal sinfulness and guilt. According to this revealed truth the transformed believer is to live. It is most exciting to observe that the Greek word translated *"knowledge"* in this passage denotes a full knowledge, or a precise and correct knowledge grounded in personal experience. It is more than a perceived knowledge; it is a persuaded knowledge involving full conviction because of what the mind has seen.

To continue in the love of God is for one to *"deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"* (Lk 9:23), as the Master urged. He said, *"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light"* (Mt 11:30), because as we join in His burden of life to save as many souls as possible we partake



of His great loving heart and affection. To continue in the love of God is to *"be about my Father's business"* (Lk 2:49), as the youthful Jesus declared. It is to continue being a disciple of the Lord (Lk 14:26-27, 33) and not break the Saviour's heart as many did (Jn 6:66-67). The disciples *"must through many tribulations (mental mistreatment if not physical) enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22).

## Maintaining the Attitude and Conduct

To continue in the love of God is to continue in that attitude and conduct prescribed by Divine revelation in the Ten Commandments, as further simplified and enlarged upon by the Lord Jesus and later New Testament revelation:

1. The Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17, Dt 5:1-22) is simply God's endeavour to sum up in words the conclusions of Divine intelligence upon what our reasonable requirements of life are in view of our moral relations. It is a true intelligence of our situation reduced to words (See in Chapter 4, page 53). The Ten Commandments did not create obligation; they merely defined obligations which already existed by the very nature of our moral relations to God and to our fellow men. The key idea that the Ten Commandments sought to convey was a true and sincere love to God and to our fellow men, with all the resulting blessings:

Dt 6:4-5   Dt 10:12-13   Dt 11:1 13-14, 22-23   Le 19:18   Micah 6:8

2. As previously discussed (See in Chapter 4, page 54), the Lord Jesus affirmed that the Ten Commandments were reducible to or founded upon love manifested in two directions toward God and toward man (Mt 22:36-40). Love toward God will bring about the fulfilment of the first four commandments; toward man, the last six.
3. In later New Testament revelation, the Apostle Paul particularly was inspired to simplify further the Ten Commandments by showing that if there is a disposition of love in our innermost being they will be fulfilled. *"Love is the fulfilling of the law"* (Ro 13:8-10). The bestowal of the Holy Spirit to climax our repentance and faith results in *"the love of God"* being *"shed abroad in our hearts"* (Ro 5:15). The life lived by faith in the delivering power of the Holy Spirit (Ga 5:16) maintains this attitude of love, which is the fulfilment of *"the righteousness of the law"* (Ro 8:4). (See also in Chapter 4, page 54).

## Continue in the Love of God

### Why must those who have been reconciled to God continue in the love of God?

Those passages of Scripture which stress how we are to continue in the love of God and those which solemnly warn against the danger of apostasy and eternal loss of reconciliation to God will be presented in later groupings.

1. The following passages of Scripture, in their plain and obvious meaning, command, describe, or imply the necessity of this happy continuance in the love of God as a condition of attaining final salvation. Under this grouping are gathered those passages which stress the positive admonitions and characteristics:

- (a) Those setting forth a continuing in a state of faith and submission to God:

Josh 23:8	Mt 24:13	Jn 3:16*, 36*	Jn 5:24*	Jn 6:54-58*
Jn 8:31-32	Jn 11:26*	Jn 12:36*	Jn 15:4-5, 9	Acts 11:23
Acts 13:43	Acts 14:22	Ro 1:16*	Ro 6:11	Ro 11:22
Ro 12:1	1 Co 16:13	Col 1:21-23	Col 2:6-7	1 Tim 4:16
He 3:6	He 4:14	He 10:39	Re 2:10	

\*Present tenses denoting a continuous believing or partaking of Christ.

- (b) An inner attitude of faith, love, humility, forgiveness, peace, joy, confidence, and hope:

Le 19:18	Dt 30:16	Josh 23:11
Micah 6:8	Mt 22:37-40	Mk 11:25 (Mt 6:14)
Lk 6:37	Jn 15:12, 17	Acts 10:34-35
Ro 8:4	Ro 13:8	Ro 14:7
1 Co 16:14	Ga 5:6	Ga 5:16
Ep 5:18	1 Tim 1:19	1 Tim 6:17-19
Tit 2:13	He 3:7-8, 15	He 3:14
He 6:12	He 9:28	He 10:38 (Ro 1:17)
He 12:14	Jas 1:12	1 Pe 5:5 (Jas 4:6)
1 Jn 3:21	Re 2:4	

- (c) Holiness, submissiveness, and purity of hearts:

Mt 5:8	Ro 6:13	Ro 12:2	1 Co 6:20	2 Co 7:1
He 12:9	He 12:14	1 Pe 1:15-16	Re 3:4	Re 22:14

- (d) Taking heed, watchfulness, carefulness, soberness, diligence, and prayerfulness:

Dt 4:9, 23	Josh 23:11	Mk 13:22-23	Mk 14:38	Lk 11:35
Lk 21:34, 36	Acts 20:31	1 Co 10:12	1 Co 15:2	1 Co 15:34
1 Co 16:13	Ep 5:15-16	1 Tim 4:16	Tit 2:12	He 2:1, 3
He 3:12	He 6:11-12	He 12:15	1 Pe 1:13	1 Pe 5:8
2 Pe 1:10	2 Pe 3:14, 17	2 Jn 8	Re 3:3	Re 16:15

- (e) Obeying, following, walking, and keeping commandments:

Dt 11:26-28	Dt 30:16, 20	Josh 23:6	Micah 6:8	Lk 3:8
Lk 11:28	Lk 14:27	Jn 8:51	Jn 12:35	Jn 15:10
Ro 6:19	Ro 15:18	1 Co 4:16	1 Co 11:1	Ep 5:8
He 5:9	1 Pe 1:14	1 Pe 4:17	2 Pe 1:10	

## (f) Overcoming trials and subduing temptations:

Mt 7:13-14      Jn 5:14      Jn 8:11      Ro 6:12      Ro 8:13, 17  
 Ro 13:14      1 Co 16:13      Phil 2:12      1 Tim 1:18      Jas 1:12  
 1 Pe 1:5      1 Pe 4:18      1 Pe 5:9      Re 2:7, 11, 17, 26  
 Re 3:5, 12, 21      Re 21:7

## (g) Striving for maturity of knowledge, understanding, and life:

2 Co 13:11      Ga 4:19      Col 2:7      He 13:13      2 Pe 3:18  
 1 Jn 2:24      Re 3:22

2. The following passages of Scripture reveal that all sin is a revolt against the heart and moral government of God and brings guilt and condemnation which must be repented of, confessed, forgiven, and cleansed away, with a renewed access to the atoning death of Christ in humble faith, or eternal spiritual death in final separation from God will inerrantly result. We look in vain for any qualifying words to the many solemn warnings that would exempt those who have been truly reconciled to God from applying them to themselves. In many instances it is specifically stated or implied that these warnings apply to true Christians. In a later section it will be discussed how the tender compassions of God, operating through the Christian's two Advocates, seeks to keep those truly reconciled to God in a state of affectionate and humble relationship. In this grouping we face the revealed fact, agreeable to common sense, that when we came to the Saviour in humble repentance and faith all our sins, or all wrong attitudes and actions that had been committed up to that moment, were freely and graciously forgiven, but not any future sins that we might fall into. They, being then nonentities, could not be repented of, confessed, and mercifully dealt with until they became actualities.

Nothing is said in the Bible as to the forgiveness of present sins being indulged in, nor of the present forgiveness of future sins that we may commit in the process of time. Since forgiveness is the setting aside of guilt and condemnation, it cannot occur until the voluntary events in question have taken place. It would certainly take a lot of biblical explanation to show how the credit of forgiveness could exist before the debit of guilt. This explanation is lacking. Therefore, as we would expect, all acts of sin come up for review in the august moral government of the great righteous and compassionate God, who is totally free from all favouritism and partiality, and are dealt with as they occur. We need, therefore, to continue in the love of God to remain in a state of merciful forgiveness and avoid awful guilt and condemnation, with dreadful eternal doom, if our sinful actions are allowed to remain registered against us unforgiven:

- (a) Eternal death or woeful separation from God's presence the destination of all who live a life of self-indulgence and sin, with no qualifying words to limit application to those who have never been reconciled to God:

Mt 16:27      Lk 9:24-25      (Mt 16:25-26)      (Mk 8:35-37)      Lk 13:27-28  
 Jn 5:28-29      Ro 2:5-11      Ro 8:13      1 Co 6:9      1 Co 16:22  
 Ga 5:21      Ga 6:7-9      Ep 5:5      Phil 3:18-19      He 6:7-8  
 2 Pe 2:9      1 Jn 2:17      Re 2:23      Re 20:13      Re 22:11-12

- (b) Every act of sin or persistence in rejection of our moral understanding brings guilt and condemnation, with resulting eternal death, unless repented of, confessed, forgiven, and cleansed:

Eze 18:20	Eze 18:24, 26	Eze 33:12-13	Eze 33:18	Mt 5:22
Mt 18:34-35	Mk 11:25-26	(Mt 6:14-15)	Lk 9:26	(Mk 8:38)
Lk 12:8-9	(Mt 10:32-33)	Lk 15:6-7	Lk 9-10	Lk 15:32
Jn 5:14	Acts 8:20-23	Ro 6:16, 23	1 Co 3:17	1 Co 8:11-13
1 Co 9:27	1 Co 11:27-32	1 Co 11:34	Ga 1:8-9	Col 3:25
1 Tim 3:6-7	1 Tim 5:24	He 12:14-17	Jas 1:13-16	Jas 5:9, 12
Jas 5:19-20	1 Jn 5:16-17	Re 3:4	Re 14:9-11	Re 21:8
Re 21:27				

- (c) Some climactic wilful sins against clearly understood moral enlightenment which are unpardonable and result in apostasy and eternal condemnation:

Ex 32:33	Nu 15:30-31	Mk 3:28-29	(Mt 12:31-32)	(Lk 12:10)
He 6:4-6	He 10:26-29	He 10:30-31	2 Pe 2:20-22	1 Jn 5:16
Re 22:18	Re 22:19			

- (d) God eternally opposed with righteous indignation to all falsehood and sinful revolt in whoever is involved:

Ps 7:11	Mk 3:5	Ro 1:18	Ro 2:5, 8	Ep 5:6-7
Col 3:6	1 Pe 3:12	1 Pe 5:5	(Jas 4:6)	

- (e) Forgiveness of sins is not automatic in the Christian life, always requires repentance, confession, and the exercise of a humbled faith in the atoning death of Christ (really a re-opening of the Saviour's wounded heart) before forgiveness and cleansing can take place:

Ex 32:30-35	Ps 32:1-5	51:1-4	Prov 28:13	Joel 2:12-14
Lk 22:31-32	Acts 8:20-24	Ro 5:9-10	Ro 6:1-2	1 Co 5:4-5
2 Co 7:9-11	He 6:6	He 10:26, 29	Jas 5:19-20	1 Jn 1:9

## Continue in the Love of God

**Those reconciled to God must continue in the love of God because only thus can we contribute to the happiness of the Godhead and avoid bringing unspeakable grief to our Creator and Benefactor.**

It is most difficult for us to realize how important we are to the happiness of the great God. The Psalmist experienced this when he wrote: *"What is man that You take thought of him?"* (Ps 8:3-4). We have seen that man has been endowed with the moral nature of his Creator, so that he is a micro-miniature replica of the Divine Beings. Obviously, this remarkable reproduction was brought about for a purpose. Moral abilities are restless without their proper exercise. The Godhead proposed to exercise Their moral abilities in happy manifestation toward man, with

infinite comprehension of blessed experiences. Man was to have blessed exercises of his moral nature in the great expanse of the Divine nature and in the realm of physical consciousness.

Love is simply the virtuous outflow of the moral abilities of personality. *"God is love"* in very essence and therefore can only find full happiness toward moral creatures when they are willing to be intelligent and submissive toward their Divine Benefactors. Can there be any greater objective in life than for you and I to live so that we can make our intended contribution toward the unlimited experiences of happiness and joy that the Divine contemplation is capable of?

Job was such a blessing to God, millenniums ago, that God bragged about him to His great antagonist Satan (Job 1:8). God called Abraham and Moses His friends and condescended in a special way to them (2 Chr 20:7, Jas 2:23, Ex 33:11). God is pictured as identifying each moral creature willing to live in right relation to Him and singling such out for special manifestations (2 Chr 16:9, 2 Co 6:16-18). The Divine joy is limited only by the immeasurable Divine capacity to experience (Zeph 3:17). But, tragically beyond words, the Divine capacity to experience disappointment and grief is also immeasurable. Think of God's suffering such grief that He experienced a climax of regret that man had ever been created (Ge 6:5-7). The Divine grief over the nation Israel's rejection of the continued overtures of Divine love, and the necessary unhappy measures of judgment that had to be taken, were summarized in chapter 6, pages 78 to 82.

The Lord Jesus wanted to raise men in moral resurrection until they would be more than servants they were to be friends (Jn 15:13-15) that He could relax with and enjoy along with the other Members of the holy Trinity (Jn 14:23, 17, Re 3:20, Ro 14:17). Our Lord was *"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"* (Is 53:3) during His earthly sojourn, first and foremost, because He was *"the Lamb of God"* to suffer unto death for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29), but also because the great mass of mankind did not want to experience the great love and endless blessings that filled His bosom, as has been discussed, His own dear ones whom He *"loved... them to the end"* (Jn 13:1) also caused Him grief and disappointment.

Only God can discern the fine dividing line between sluggishness and stubbornness or indifference. Our Lord was often pained as He looked through the externals and evaluated the heart motives of His disciples. He reprimanded them on occasions, as when He said, *"O you of little faith"*, when they had awakened Him in panic during a storm (Mt 8:26) and when they failed to see obvious truth (Mt 16:8) *"Do you have a hardened heart?"* (Mk 8:17). They could not cast out a demon *"because of your unbelief"* and prayerlessness (Mt 17:19-21). When the Master poured out His heart as to the spiritual intimacy He desired to have with them, many said, *"This is a difficult statement"* and *"withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore"* (Jn 6:60, 66).

Most pathetically, He said to those closest to Him: *"You do not want to go away also, do you?"* (Jn 6:67). His sensitive heart wanted them to do more than merely stay with Him; He wanted them to want or desire to stay. *"You men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"* He had to say as the shadow of the cross was approaching Him (Mt 26:40-41). His instances of joy over men's faith did not seem to have been numerous, but drew forth appreciative response (Mt 8:18-10, 15:28).

The intimate personal relationship of the resurrected and glorified Christ with those who have

embraced His gospel in repentance and faith is revealed as a "mystery" (Ep 3:3-6). The Holy Spirit has been given to indwell the believer with a unique relationship of absolute intimacy not dependent for communication upon the five senses as every other relationship of man's is. The Lord Jesus was active in man's creation and was to have complete prominence (Col 1:16-18). Christ and His Church was to be an organism, animated by Divine life, not a mere organization (Col 1:27). The Lord Jesus has redeemed repentant mankind for Himself, a people for His own possession (Tit 2:14). They have been brought into a "first love" for their Saviour (Re 2:4), even as the Apostle John testified: "*We love, because He first loved us*" (1 Jn 4:19). This unity of love was to have moved the world toward God (Jn 17:23) and bear much spiritual fruit (Jn 15:5, 8, 16).

Because of this extremely intimate personal relationship, any problem that enters to obstruct the free flow of loving fellowship between God and ourselves brings disappointment and grief to the loving Godhead. "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*", we are admonished (Ep 4:30). If God must rebuke us for our conduct and bring about chastisement to restore us to loving relationship, this must be contrary to the way God would like to manifest His love (He 12:5-11). Our departure from an attitude of loving response appears to deeply affect the Godhead (Re 2:4-5). Spiritual immaturity is as unbecoming and depressing as physical retardation (He 5:12-14). We may resist the recovering measures of the Holy Spirit to the point of quenching or extinguishing His operations within us (1 Th 5:19). Then takes place the sin of apostasy which we have been warned against (He 6:6, 10:29). God wants to bless man in every way through the Gospel (Ro 8:32). How must the Godhead feel when all Their provisions for blessing become vain or to no permanent profit (2 Co 6:1, 1 Th 3:5)?

The greatest motivation to continue happily in the love of God, therefore, is to contribute to the Divine happiness and thereby have the privilege of multiplying ourselves in Divine greatness and avoid being the occasion of an abyss of grief that rejected Divine love must be capable of experiencing.

## Experiencing Blessed Relationships

**Those reconciled to God must continue in the love of God because only thus can we experience the full orbit of blessed relationships with the Godhead and with our fellow men for which we were created and endowed.**

We must avoid the wretchedness of a life of sin and defeat, which brings separation from the energizing life of the Godhead or present spiritual death. "*The wages of sin is death*" (Ro 6:23). "*The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace*" (Ro 8:6). "*She who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives*" (1 Tim 5:6). "*The wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, . . . There is no peace. . .*" (Is 57:20-21). "*All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man*" (Mk 7:20-23). "*Fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul*" (1 Pe 2:11). "*Both their mind and their conscience are defiled*" (Tit 1:15).

"*For your heart is not right before God. . . you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity*" (Acts 8:21, 23). Such are in "*the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him*

to do his will" (2 Tim 2:26). Being *"again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first"* (2 Pe 2:20). This state *"enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another"* (Tit 3:3).

When a person must exclaim in total spiritual defeat, *"Wretched man that I am!"*, this is certainly a radical contrast to the victory of faith. *"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* (Ro 7:24-25). It is the difference between the slavery of sin and the freedom of deliverance (Jn 8:34, 36).

In this state of selfishness and spiritual defeat we cannot but contribute to our own unhappiness and of all we come in contact with. *"Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me"*, said the Psalmist David in his defeat and guilt (Ps 32:3-4). We radiate to others what we are in the depths of our own beings. We cannot lead others into a restful and buoyant spirit unless we have one ourselves. *"I am come that they might have life"* said the Lord Jesus (Jn 10:10). This life is a state of being *"reconciled to God"* (2 Co 5:20), a turn about from continually *"going astray... unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"*, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pe 2:25). It is a renunciation of the life of unintelligent and restless concentration upon one's own happiness to enter the realm of true intelligence and live a life according to our true relations to God and to our fellow men. It is to be admitted into *"the kingdom of God"* and live a life of *"righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"* (Ro 14:17). It is a state of being able to live quietly with ourselves, with a good conscience and *"confidence toward God"* (1 Jn 3:20-21, Acts 24:16).

We ought, therefore, to be continuing in the love of God, not only to be a blessing to God and contribute to the Divine satisfaction and happiness, but to be a blessing to our fellow men and to ourselves in maintaining that intelligent composure of personality which alone can bring happiness.

The Holy Spirit has been bestowed as the special Agent of the Godhead in this age of grace to *"reprove (or convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"* (Jn 16:8). Because the Lord Jesus was no longer putting God on exhibition in His earthly life (Jn 1:18), the world was to be shown what heart righteousness was like by the resurrected and glorified Christ living out His life in the hearts of those reconciled to God, through the enthroning operations of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:10). *"We will come unto him, and make our abode with him"*, said the Lord Jesus of Himself and of the Father (Jn 14:23). *"I will love him, and will manifest myself to him"* (Jn 14:21). *"I in them, and you in me... that the world may know... that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them... that they might have my joy fulfilled in them"* (Jn 17:23, 26, 13), *"that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"* (Jn 15:13). *"If you know these things, happy are you if you do them"* (Jn 13:17). With all these glorious promises, no wonder the Apostle Paul wrote: *"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"* (1 Tim 4:8).

## **How to Continue in Love and Victory?**

**How are those reconciled to God to continue in the love of God in victory over sin?**

In Old Testament times men were saved by accepting God's revelation through the nation Israel, repenting of their sins, and bringing the prescribed animal sacrifices in the exercise of faith. They experienced forgiveness and many blessings, but were to be guided in life by God's revealed written declarations through the law of Moses as to how they were to live. Under the New Covenant of New Testament revelation, new internal forces were to be substituted for the external directives of the Old Covenant (He 8:6-13, 12:24). The Old Testament revelation was blessed and could produce a happy and blessed deliverance, but lacked motivation and dynamic (Ro 8:3-4). Motivation to continue in the faith under the Gospel is not by duty but out of constraining love (2 Co 5:14).

Enforced regulation was not to be a part of this glorious "*era of the grace of God*" (Ep 3:2). The relationships of salvation are now of such a glorious nature that God is not supposed to have problems in keeping His own dear ones in happy submission.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has for its main thrust to show that the New Covenant is far superior to the Old. Thus the fullness of the Holy Spirit brought great victory over sin in early New Testament times: Acts 2:4, 46-47, 4:8, 13, 31, 33, 13:52, Ro 8:37. This blessed victory over sin is the very core of Gospel truth, not a voluntary addition:

Jn 8:36      Ro 6:11-2, 4, 14      Ro 7:6      Ro 8:2, 32      Ro 14:17      1 Co 15:57  
 2 Co 3:17      Ga 5:16, 18      Ep 5:18-20      1 Pe 1:6-8      1 Jn 2:12-14      1 Jn 3:9-10  
 1 Jn 5:3-5

1. Remarkable Divine relationships and initiatives have been provided, so that God can say that everything possible has been done to make man a happy, forgiven, and delivered being bringing joy to both God and man in fulfilment of God's plan of creation.

In Old Testament times those especially called of God were given many profound experiences of God's presence and deliverance from sin: Is 57:15, Ge 17:1-4, Ex 3:2-8, 33:9-11, Is 6:1-5, 2 Chr 16:9. But in New Testament times these blessed experiences of God's intimate presence is intended to be given to all who come to Christ in sincere repentance from all known sin and in the committal of faith.

- (a) Passages describing intimate fellowship with the Triune Godhead:

Jn 4:13-14      Jn 7:37-39      Jn 14:16-17      Jn 14:21, 23      Jn 15:14-15  
 Jn 17:23, 26      Acts 17:27-28      Ro 6:14      Ro 7:6      Ro 8:9-11  
 Ro 8:15-16      1 Co 1:30      1 Co 3:16      1 Co 6:17      1 Co 6:19-20  
 2 Co 5:16-17      2 Co 6:16-18      2 Co 11:2      2 Co 13:5      Ga 2:20  
 Ep 2:18, 22      Ep 5:18-21      Col 1:27      1 Th 5:10      1 Jn 1:3  
 1 Jn 2:27      1 Jn 5:12, 20      Re 3:20

- (b) The resurrected and glorified Lord Jesus has become our heavenly Advocate and Intercessor:

Mt 28:20      Lk 22:32      Jn 10:3-4      Jn 10:11      Jn 15:17-19  
 Jn 17:9-13      Ro 4:25      Ro 5:9-10      Ro 7:4      Ro 8:34  
 He 4:14-16      He 5:8-10      He 7:24-27      He 8:1-2      He 9:11-15  
 He 9:24-26      He 10:12-14      He 10:19-23      1 Jn 2:1-2



## (c) The Holy Spirit our Comforter, Guide, and Energizer:

Lk 24:49	Jn 14:16-17	Jn 14:26	Jn 15:26	Jn 16:7
Jn 13-15	Acts 1:8	Acts 9:31	Ro 5:5	Ro 8:2
Ro 8:14, 26-27	1 Co 10:13	1 Co 12:3	2 Co 3:17	Ga 5:18
Phil 2:13	1 Jn 2:20, 27			

2. Christian watchfulness, obedience, continuance in the faith, and prayerfulness imperative for spiritual victory.

Deliverance from sin as promised in the Gospel is impossible unless we are willing to live a life in communication with God, for it is the Godhead who must deliver us. If we do not want to take the trouble to maintain this happy submissive life, then we are left to fight our own battles with gruesome defeat on every hand. If we *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"* we *"shall be filled"*, said Jesus to the mountain multitude (Mt 5:6). Therefore, the blessed instructions on the *"how"* of Gospel deliverance must be addressed to those who want it.

The following passages indicate the necessity of this constant and persistent attitude of sincerity:

Mt 4:4	Mt 5:6	Lk 8:15	Lk 12:15	Lk 15:17-24
Lk 18:1	Lk 21:34-36	Lk 22:31	Jn 6:53-58	Jn 14:15, 21
Jn 14:23	Jn 15:9-10, 12	Acts 9:31	Ro 6:19, 22	Ro 8:4
Ro 11:20	1 Co 9:25	1 Co 11:28-29	2 Co 7:11	2 Co 11:3
2 Co 13:5	Ga 6:8	Ep 5:15-16	Phil 1:9-11	Phil 2:5
Phil 3:7-14	Phil 4:8-9	Col 1:9-12	Col 3:16-17	1 Tim 4:16
He 2:1, 3	He 3:6, 12	He 4:11, 14, 16	He 6:11-12	He 10:23
He 10:35-36	He 12:28-29	1 Pe 1:13, 17	1 Pe 4:7-8	1 Pe 5:5-6
2 Pe 1:5-8	2 Pe 3:14, 17	Jude 20-21		

3. There must be a climactic renunciation of the principle of supreme self-gratification in each crisis of temptation or solicitation to indulge in what we know to be wrong.

Deliverance from sin is not automatic. These endless climaxes of will are in essence a renewal of our repentance, or of an attitude of self-denial. There was a total renunciation of self-supremacy when we first came to Christ: Lk 14:26-27, 33, Jn 12:25, Ro 6:6, Ga 2:20, 5:24, 6:14. The endless series of climaxes that must take place for spiritual deliverance are set forth, for example, in the words: *"present yourselves to God"* (Ro 6:13) and *"present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification"* (Ro 6:19).

*"Present"* is in the Greek aorist tense, imperative mode, and is thus a command for punctiliar or climactic action, a simple act without regard to progress, and thus may be endlessly repeated. The verbs *"present your bodies a living sacrifice"* (Ro 12:1), *"put off... the old man"* (Ep 4:22), and *"put on the new man"* (Ep 4:24) are aorist infinitives and thus indicate climactic or instantaneous actions, without regard to time, and thus are to be repeated endlessly to maintain our consecration to Christ.

In each challenge to our consecration that faces us, the Holy Spirit is seeking to persuade us by all sorts of approaches to renew our renunciation of self, but in each case it is we ourselves that must instantly respond, or no deliverance can be granted. Passages describing the climactic and sometimes violent nature of this self-renunciation are:

Mk 9:43-48	Lk 9:23*	Ro 6:11	Ro 6:13*, 19*	Ro 12:1-2+
Ro 13:14*	1 Co 9:26-27	Ep 4:22+, 24+	Ep 4:27	Ep 4:30
1 Th 5:19	He 3:7-8,15	He 5:14	He 12:9	Jas 1:12
Jas 1:14-16	Jas 4:7			

\* Aorist imperatives, + Aorist infinitives (Climactic actions)

4. This climactic renunciation of self must be followed by aggressive actions of faith if spiritual victory is to be achieved.

The Godhead are seeking to inspire or draw out this faith by all means at Their disposal. Faith "*is the gift of God*" (Ep 2:8) in the sense that it is Divinely induced. Faith is always our own act in the sense that it is our response to Divine condescension. It is climactic in the sense that it is an arousal of all our energies of confidence and trust to overcome a particular crisis:

- (a) Examples of and admonitions to faith, which achieved the power of God in men's lives:

Mt 8:8, 10, 13	Mt 9:28, 29	Mt 14:29, 31	Mt 15:25, 28	Mt 17:20
Mk 4:40	Mk 5:28, 34	Mk 5:36	Mk 9:23-24	Mk 9:28-29
Mk 11:22, 24	Lk 5:5	Lk 11:9-10	Lk 11:13	Lk 17:5-6
Jn 11:25-26	Jn 16:24	Ro 7:18, 21	Ro 7:24, 25	

- (b) Blessed spiritual victory is to be achieved only by aggressively exercising faith or trust in God for deliverance after each instance of self-renunciation. Some passages may be duplicated to convey the idea of the positive. We cannot turn from something into a vacuum. When we turn from sin we must turn to God in faith (1 Th 1:9). When we refuse to yield ourselves to sin, we must by that act yield ourselves to God to do what our enlightened conscience tells us to do. The passages follow:

Mt 26:41	Acts 11:23	Ro 1:17	Ro 7:25
Ro 8:3-4	Ro 8:13	Ro 12:2	Ro 13:14
1 Co 10:12	1 Co 15:10	2 Co 1:24	2 Co 3:18
2 Co 5:7	Ga 2:20	Ga 5:16	Ga 5:25
Ep 3:16	Ep 3:17-19	Ep 4:23	Ep 5:14
Ep 5:18-21	Ep 6:10-18	Phil 2:12	Phil 4:1
Col 1:23	Col 2:6-7	1 Th 3:8	1 Tim 1:18-19
1 Tim 6:12	He 10:38-39	He 12:1-2	Jas 4:7
Jas 4:8	1 Pe 1:5	1 Pe 5:8-9	1 Jn 5:4
Jude 24	Re 12:11		

- (c) This faith is cultivated and inspired by the loving illumination of the Holy Spirit, as previously outlined:

Jn 3:27	Jn 6:37, 44	Jn 6:45, 65	Jn 16:13-15	Ro 5:5
Ro 8:14, 26-27	Ro 10:17	1 Co 2:4-5	1 Co 12:3	2 Co 3:18
Ep 1:17-19	Ep 2:8-9	Ep 3:16-17	Phil 2:13	Col 1:27

## Possibility of Apostasy?

### Do the Scriptures solemnly warn against the dreadful possibility of apostasy?

We have seen that salvation involves a submission to truth and a choice to forsake all known sin and commit ourselves to the atoning death of a loving Saviour to be forgiven and restored. Only the action of our innermost being or "*heart*" could bring about such complete revolution of life. Profound evidences from our own personalities and experiences with the world of men and nature had pressed upon us the urgency of seeking the great source of all existence in proper respect and worship. In addition, Divine revelation of Biblical truth multiplied this enlightenment and urgency. We had resisted this sum total of moral illumination from the dawn of our moral accountability until the moment of our conversion, when we submitted to the whole en-mass and took appropriate action to enter into the beckoning mercy of God.

The glorious joy of reconciliation to God made the thought of rejecting what the Holy Spirit desired to teach us from day to day unthinkable. We said with the enthusiastic Israelites of old "*All the words which the Lord has said will we do*" (Ex 24:3). Our hearts were mellow and tender "*because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us*" (Ro 5:5).

We had one essential thing to do "*shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*" (He 12:9). We had "*ears to hear*" and a submissive heart to obey all that our blessed Saviour taught us and our heart "*burned*" within us in exquisite fellowship. But we are not mechanical robots operated by pushbuttons of causation, therefore God has had to make a very great effort in revelations of Scripture in an endeavour to keep us in that happy submission, apart from which neither God nor man can be happy:

1. Those happily reconciled to God may resist the truth that they have come to perceive by refusing to obey or remain submissive to increased understanding.

This the Scripture calls the hardening of the heart, which is the choice of our wills not to conform our lives to new perceived obligations. There is no reason why we choose to resist the continued loving manifestations and leadings of the Holy Spirit, except that we ourselves of our own volition mysteriously so choose. There is no causation back of our wills except we ourselves, nothing to blame except our own abuse of solemn responsibility. Since such choices are the origination of our own personalities, they form the basis of reward and condemnation from a loving and righteous Moral Governor. We have seen from a multitude of revelations how impartial God is.

This process of hardening has no gauge of intensity except the decision of a great loving God as to how serious our resistance is, which must involve our ability, enlightenment, experiences, and the Divine measures taken in our behalf. We always begin the pathway

of resistance over small and some times relatively insignificant objects of enlightenment. Heart resistance develops like a callus on our hand. The more the resistance encountered in muscular exertion, the greater the build-up of skin tissue. When the Holy Spirit seeks to turn us from a wrong attitude that we have gotten into, we must increase our resistance or hardness of heart to keep ourselves from breaking down our rebellion and submitting to God. We are frequently warned against this build-up of resistance. Some of these passages appear to relate to those who have never been reconciled to God, but the principles of developing resistance are the same:

Mt 13:15      Mk 6:52      Mk 8:17, 21      Acts 7:51      Ro 2:5, 8  
 1 Co 11:27-29      Ep 4:17-18      He 3:7-8, 10, 15

2. The Holy Spirit and faithful servants of Christ take various measures to get us to reverse our rebellious attitudes and return to submission, before we develop a more impossible hardness of heart. The Holy Spirit has taken up an absolutely intimate association in our lives and we are warned not to "*grieve*" Him (Ep 4:30). Tragically, many Christians seem to have resisted the Holy Spirit in His loving recovery measures. Submission is a state of repentance.

When we resist God's enlightenment, the Holy Spirit is seeking "*to renew (us) again to repentance*" (He 6:6). True servants of God are working along with the Holy Spirit in this great restoring operation. One of the most moving self-prostrations ever recorded was when Moses interceded for Israel over the golden calf apostasy (Ex 32:30-33), when he earned the title of being "*very meek*" (Nu 12:3). Some of the blessed New Testament recovery operations are as follows:

Mt 18:12-14      Lk 13:6-9      Lk 22:31-32      Acts 8:18-24      1 Co 5:4-5  
 1 Co 11:27-34      Ga 6:1-2      2 Tim 2:24-26      He 12:4-11      Jas 5:19-20  
 1 Jn 5:16-17      Jude 22-23      Re 2:4-5      Re 3:3-5      Re 3:19

3. Solemn warnings are given on every hand in Scripture in an endeavour to persuade those who have been truly reconciled to God to be on constant guard that they do not develop a resistance against the loving manifestations of God's will, to the point of apostasy or eternal loss of their souls:

Dt 4:23-24      Dt 11:26-28      Dt 29:25-28      Josh 23:11-13      1 Kgs 9:6-9  
 1 Chr 28:9      2 Chr 15:2      Ezra 8:22      Ps 125:5      Is 1:19-20  
 Is 1:28      Jer 17:5-6      Eze 18:24, 26      Eze 33:7      Eze 33:12-13  
 Eze 33:18      Mt 3:10      (Lk 3:9)      Mt 3:12      Mt 5:13  
 (Lk 14:34-35)      Mt 7:19      Mt 18:12-14      Mt 24:48-51      Mt 25:24-30  
 Lk 8:14      Lk 12:4-5      (Mt 10:28)      Lk 12:45-46      Lk 13:6-9  
 Lk 22:31-32      Jn 15:2      Acts 8:18-24      Acts 20:29-31      Ro 14:13, 15  
 1 Co 5:4-5      1 Co 8:11-13      1 Co 9:25-27      2 Co 6:1      2 Co 11:2-3  
 2 Co 13:5      Ga 1:6-8      Ga 3:3-4      Ga 4:9, 11      Ga 4:19-20  
 Phil 2:12      Phil 2:14-16      Col 2:8      1 Th 3:5-8      2 Tim 2:11-13  
 2 Tim 2:24-26      He 6:7-8      He 12:28-29      Jas 1:12-16      Jas 5:19-20  
 1 Pe 1:17      2 Pe 1:10      2 Pe 3:17      Re 2:4-5      Re 3:3-4  
 Re 3:5      Re 21:27      Re 22:18-19

4. There are also great many solemn warnings against the danger of our resisting God loving will and measures of recovery to the point of a wilful crisis of apostasy.

The apostasy is a climactic operation of God whereby the curtain of His loving and gracious operations with our souls is forever drawn. In many of the following passages aorist tenses of climactic action occur, indicating that there is a last wilful rebellion on part of those whom God sees the necessity of rejecting. No one just drifts into apostasy; such must rebel their way into it. Judgment may not follow immediately, but it is as certain to occur as the eternity of God Himself. There may be a relative calm from the former climax of resistance, "*When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed*", said the Lord Jesus (Lk 11:21). "*They call them rejected silver, because the LORD has rejected them*" (Jer 6:30).

This rupture of God's heart as far as His relation to a particular soul is concerned hurts the Godhead more than the tragic subject. Such have "*trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?*" (He 10:29). Such have said with Israel of old, when confronted with great moral light and persuasion: "*Let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel*" (Is 30:11). God has had to comply reluctantly with their wishes, to their own eternal mournful and regretful remorse. Such solemn warnings of the danger of approaching this climax of resistance are as follows:

Ex 32:33	Nu 15:30-31	Dt 29:18-21	30:16-19	Mt 5:22
Mt 5:29-30	Mk 3:28-29	(Mt 12:31-32)	(Lk 12:10)	Mk 9:43-48
(Mt 18:8-9)	Lk 9:62	11:24-26	Jn 15:6	Ro 11:20-22
1 Co 3:17	1 Co 11:27-34	Ga 5:1-4	1 Th 5:19	1 Tim 1:19
1 Tim 5:11-12	1 Tim 6:9-10	He 3:12-15	He 4:1	He 4:11-13
He 6:4-6	He 10:26-29	He 10:30-31	He 10:38-39	He 12:14-17
2 Pe 2:20-22	1 Jn 5:16-17	Re 3:15-16		

## Apostasy from the Faith?

### Do the Scriptures narrate instances of tragic apostasy from the faith?

The Apostle Peter was directed to write that "*IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED*" (1 Pe 4:18). It is not that the Gospel is weak and deficient in delivering repentant sinners, but rather that redeemed men are still free moral beings and thus must be controlled by moral forces. It is with difficulty, therefore, that God keeps His true spiritual children in that blessed state of submission into which they were brought when embracing the Gospel. God is continually on the alert to use means to restrain His children from departing from the way of righteousness and holiness.

"*But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit*" (1 Co 6:17). "*You are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*" (1 Co 3:16).

With one Advocate with the Father and one Advocate or Comforter in the heart, God has established relationships with man that enable the strongest of moral forces to be exerted.

Although the obstacles to man's spiritual success are very great, once repentant sinners have experienced the blessings of reconciliation to God, have been brought into intimate fellowship with the glorified Christ, and have been spiritually energized by the indwelling Holy Spirit, these strong moral forces are so effective that relatively few ever rebel against God's loving measures to their own destruction. Nevertheless Scripture narrates a number of personal tragedies and also refers to groups who were successful in revolting against the love of God to their own destruction:

1. The most awful instance of apostasy from God's loving reconciliation was the Apostle Judas. We may outline the facts concerning his life as follows:
  - (a) The Lord Jesus, after a night of prayer (Lk 6:12), declared His purpose in calling forth the Twelve: Mk 3:14-15. Notice that they were all His Disciples (Lk 6:13).
  - (b) Judas most certainly must have been in a state of salvation when chosen and sent out to represent Christ:
    - Mt 10:5, 6, 7, 8 (Lk 9:1, Mk 6:13, Mt 12:25-26)
    - Mt 10:13, 14, 16, 20 (Jn 8:44), 22, 25, 40, Mt 7:6
    - Mk 6:7, 11, 12, 13, 30,
    - Lk 7:39, Lk 9:1, 2, 5, 6, Lk 10:20, Lk 22:3-6 (Jn 13:2)
    - Jn 13:20.
  - (c) As Jesus spoke more particularly of the requirements of salvation in His later ministry, His popularity greatly declined (Jn 6:51-60, 66).
  - (d) Some of those close to Jesus turned back in unbelief, the instant of their forsaking the path of submission and faith, along with the secret plans of Judas, being supernaturally known to Christ (Jn 6:64). "*Should betray him*" is better rendered "*would deliver him up*".
  - (e) It is declared in Jn 6:70 only that Judas then was a devil, with a strong implication that he was not such when called out to serve Christ in an intimate way: "*Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil? Should betray him*" (Jn 6:70) is better rendered "*was about to be delivering him up*". It is unthinkable that the lowly sincere Master would choose "*a devil*" for Himself, with the object of representing Him in ministry to needy souls on the brink of eternal doom. No present day leader (political, moral, or religious) would think of choosing an opponent to receive all his secrets and help in furthering his cause.
  - (f) Judas, who was trusted as treasurer (Jn 13:29), showed himself out of sympathy with Christ's mission (Jn 12:4-6), made his dreadful covenant with Christ's enemies (Mt 26:14-16), and braced himself against the kind overtures of his best Friend (Jn 13:21, 26).
  - (g) His doom became sealed (Jn 13:27), he had rebelled beyond the recovering mercy of God and was abandoned to Satan, his now chosen master. Going out into the night, morally as well as physically (Jn 13:30), he could now kiss his former Master with a cold and calloused heart (Mt 26:47-50).

- (h) He became conscience-stricken after the Lord was condemned to die and repented, but too late for forgiveness. He went out and hanged himself, entering into eternal remorse as he endlessly and persistently haunted by the Saviour's love which he had spurned (Mt 27:3-8). He had received the highest ministry possible to man, but had successfully turned aside in rebellion against the most dynamic moral force that man has ever been confronted with a personalized Divine love (Acts 1:17, 25).
2. Various references and tense structures in the New Testament indicate that other apostasies took place.
- (a) 1 Co 10:5-12 - This solemn passage refers to many disappointing experiences which God had with the nation Israel, with the judgments that had to be taken. Their doom is set forth as a warning to those reconciled to God under the Gospel.
- (b) 1 Tim 1:5-7 - *"Straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion"*.
- (c) 1 Tim 1:18-20 - *"Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander"*.
- (d) 1 Tim 5:15 - *"For some have already turned aside to follow Satan"*.
- (e) 1 Tim 6:9-10 - *"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs"*.
- (f) 1 Tim 6:20-21 - *"Which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith"*.
- (g) 2 Tim 2:16-18 - *"Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some"*.
- (h) 2 Tim 4:10 - *"For Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me"*.
- (i) 2 Pe 2:22 - *"It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT', and, 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire'"*.
3. King Saul in Old Testament times represents a tragic instance of apostasy, causing God to repent that He had made Saul king of Israel: 1 Sam 15:10-11, 23, 26, 35, 16:1, 14.
- (a) Saul appears to have been a most impressive person in appearance and heart, transformed and anointed by the Holy Spirit: 1 Sam 9:1-2, 15-17, 10:1, 6, 9-11, 24-26, 11:6-7.
- (b) The conditions of happy relationship with God were respect and obedience: 1 Sam 12:13-15, 20-25, 15:22.
- (c) Saul began to manifest a presumptuous and disobedient spirit: 1 Sam 13:11-14 (usurped the priestly functions), 1 Sam 15:9 (failed to destroy the Amalekites whom God purposed to judge for their wickedness 1 Sam 15:1-3, 18), 1 Sam 15:13-14, 19-21 (was presumptive and deceitful, excusing himself).

- (d) Saul's professed repentance was doubtless, insincere and too late for God to pardon: 1 Sam 15:23-26, 35, 16:1, 14.
  - (e) Saul was afflicted with evil spirits and lived a greatly agitated and revengeful life until he finally took his own life: 1 Sam 16:14-16, 23, 18:29.
4. Solomon, although beginning his reign as king of Israel in a most humble and God approved manner, amazingly made shipwreck of his noble life upon the sea licentiousness.
- (a) Solomon began his public life in a manner pleasing to God, not seeking self-glorification or materialistic prosperity: 1 Kgs 3:3 ("*Solomon loved the Lord*"), 1 Kgs 3:5-14 (his humble requests "*pleased the Lord*" (1 Kgs 3:10), who richly bestowed abilities and blessings upon him).
  - (b) The luxurious temple was built in Jerusalem and humbly dedicated to the Lord: 1 Kgs 5:3-5, 7:51, 8:22-30 (prayer of dedication), 1 Kgs 8:54-61 (conclusion with conditions of blessing), 2 Chr 6:3 (Solomon most humble), 2 Chr 7:1 (God's answer by fire), 2 Chr 7:8-11 (an obedient happy nation).
  - (c) Solomon, and Israel through him, was sternly warned of the dangers and consequences of apostasy, and the conditions of mercy and renewal: 2 Chr 7:12-22, also see 1 Chr 28:9-10, 1 Kgs 6:11-13, 9:1-9.
  - (d) The wisdom which God had given Solomon became world renowned (including 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs): 1 Kgs 4:29-34 (3:16-18), 2 Chr 9:5-8, 22-24, Mt 12:42.
  - (e) Solomon's empire was greatly prospered and he became known as the great commercial king of Israel: 1 Chr 29:23-25, 1 Kgs 9:26-28, 10:22.
  - (f) Amazingly enough, this wise man did not continue to apply his supernaturally endowed wisdom to the regulation of his own life, but disobeyed God (Dt 17:17) and built up an even greater establishment of lust than the heathen kings, to his own moral destruction and eternal ruin: 1 Kgs 11:1-3 (he involved himself with many heathen women), 1 Kgs 11:4-8 (which turned away his heart from the Lord), 1 Kgs 11:9-13 (and led to the judgment of God).
  - (g) In view of God's loving but firm warning (1 Chr 28:9) and the absence of any record of repentance, but rather of a rebellion against God's judgment (1 Kgs 11:40), we can only conclude that eternal remorse is now his portion in dreadful remembrance of his forsaken blessing and God given wisdom. He made shipwreck of his fervent faith and submission to God upon the sea of licentiousness.



## Establishment in the life of sanctification through the Holy Spirit

- *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Co 7:1).*
- *“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Ga 5:16).*
- *“Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Ep 5:18-20).*
- *“Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Pe 2:2).*
- *“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pe 3:18).*
- *“I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner” (He 13:19).*
- *“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed” (Col 2:6-7).*
- *“My children, with whom I am again in labour until Christ is formed in you” (Ga 4:19).*
- *“So that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus” (1 Th 3:13).*
- *“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love” (Ep 3:17).*

We have abundantly seen from Scripture testimony the necessity of persistent watchfulness against all forces that would turn our hearts away from a happy relationship with our Saviour. All too often we have experienced a struggle to get our own consent to give up wrongful gratifications (sometimes seemingly small and insignificant). *“The breast of every Christian is a field of battle where sometimes benevolence and sometimes selfishness gains the victory”*, wrote one theologian. Is there no let up from these constant struggles? Is there no point that can be reached in Christian experience when intermittent wavering in our consecration are eliminated, or at least reduced to momentary less passionate departures? Is there no point that

can be reached where the balance scale is slanted to the side of virtue? Is there no plateau of spiritual experience that can be reached where we may become established in the faith, so that it becomes easier and more natural to abide in Christ?

Most happily, the New Testament sets forth very frequently, by using many words of different shades of meaning, that a more permanent state of abiding in Christ is not only possible but is according to the plan and provisions of a loving God. In fact, God is so determined that all those reconciled to Him shall become spiritually mature that lack of progress toward this achievement is very grievous to Him (1 Co 2:14-16, 3:1:4, He 5:11-14).

## What is Not continuing in the Love of God

**What is not the manner of attaining a firmly established life of continuing in the love of God.**

1. Those truly reconciled to God do not become firmly established in a life of a spiritual victory by making a single full consecration of themselves to Christ. Those who affirm that a single once-for-all consecration of ourselves to Christ brings full and constant deliverance have usually held that there is a salvation apart from a full consecration, and thus that self-dedication is a hopeful option in the Christian life that does not affect one's standing before God. On the one hand, there are those who hold that repentance from all known sin, or total submission to God, is not a requirement for salvation, that only a single climactic act of faith in Christ is required. Others hold that repentance is in fact required, but that repentance may be partial because of the possibility of mixed moral action. Men may partly obey what they perceive to be their moral obligation, and partly disobey at the same time. Full consecration is attained when we are willing to obey fully or totally submit to Christ. Even so, many holding this view do not appear to believe that man ever does fully obey God, but that man's apparent outward obedience is always tainted by an inner mixed motive, partly virtuous, partly selfish.

We have seen that moral action is of a simple nature; it is either this or that, but not this and that. We either obey and submit to all the moral light we possess at a given moment, or we do not. We may obey one hour and disobey the next, but to do both at once is just as impossible as walking forward and backward at the same time. The blessed Gospel is a remedy for the devastations of sin, and unless we are willing to repent of everything we understand to be sin, no application of the remedy can take place. A loving God could not tolerate man continuing in stupid rebellion when He fully knows that the only way man can be blessed is to forsake his rebellion en-mass. There may and must be endless acts of re-consecration in the Christian life, but never a first full consecration because this is its entrance requirement.

2. Nor by the eradication of a so-called "*sinful nature*", "*inbred sin*", or a "*root of sin*".

If this view of personal psychology is true, then such eradication would enable the Christian to pursue a life of holiness unhampered by past sinful experiences, since the source of sin

with all its developments is supposedly gone. Watchfulness would not be necessary, since there is nothing left to need watching. The source of sin is totally gone. We are involved here with two important questions whether our depravity of constitution causes our wills to act under a law of cause and effect, and whether this depravity is in itself sinful before crystallized in actions of will.

We have concluded that depravity is not an isolated tangible something lodging somewhere in our personality, but rather the permanent damage that we have done to our whole sensitive personalities because of our persistence in wrongful indulgences or experiences. This habit of thought and emotions is a mighty dynamic to keep on doing what we have been doing, only with deeper penetration. This strong tendency to continue action is not, however, a compelling force and does not cause the will to act. By virtue of our mysterious endowment of free will, our innermost personalities alone have the power to originate action. Thus our depravity not only cannot be removed without evaporating our whole personalities, but it need not be removed to make its dynamic relatively ineffective. The wonderful experiences of the love of Christ in the Gospel can bury our depravity under an avalanche of heavenly visitations and give us a new slavery, endless thanks to God's grace (Ro 6:22, 2 Co 5:14). If simmering steaks are waiting to be eaten from a new oven, why bother with cheap hamburger on the old burner?

The other question relates to the nature of sin. All surely hold that submitting to wrongful desires is sinful. These are acts of will. The question is, is this urgency of depravity sinful before submitted to in acts of will? Is sin not only a dynamic something of action, but also a static something of inaction, before moral actions or choices are brought to pass? If so, then depravity must be eradicated before the holiness of personality so often described in the New Testament could exist. But if sin is a wrong action, a choice of our wills to indulge the impulses of depravity, as our study has abundantly concluded, then no eradication of the impossible is necessary to enable us to live holy lives before the Lord. *"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh"* (Ga 5:16). **Spirituality is not an eradication of selfish desires, but a conquest of them and a starvation of them by victorious neglect.**

3. Nor by claiming to have an established constant victory over sin when we do not in fact have the reality.

From the many blessed words studied, it is most evident that sanctification or holiness reaches to the innermost depths of our personalities. *"For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart"* (Mt 12:34). *"So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit"* said the Lord Jesus (Mt 7:17-18). A life lived in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit will unmistakably be recognized in the struggles of daily living. The outward manner of life will testify to all of an inward reality. Therefore, it is entirely unnecessary to tell anyone that we have experienced the grace of God in sanctification or inner purification and deliverance from sin they will automatically know it by our works.

The Apostle Peter was moved to write some good advice: *"But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defence to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence"* (1 Pe 3:15-16).

In other words, we are to concentrate upon maintaining a humble heart before the Lord and tell people the secrets of sanctification only when the net product in our manner of life has caused them to be curious as to why and how we live as we do. If we go about claiming an advanced state of sanctification, we are setting ourselves up as possessing more than others, whereas we need to prove it by our lives if this is so.

The Apostle Paul said: *"In holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you"* (2 Co 1:12). *"But by the grace of God I am what I am"* (1 Co 15:10). He proved the depth of penetration of the grace of God into his personality by labouring for his Master *"more abundantly than they all"*.

## Achieving Sanctification

Many different words with various shades of meaning are used in the New Testament to indicate not only the possibility but the expectancy that all those reconciled to God should attain an established or mature state of sanctification.

The various usages of these words that relate to the subject of the perfection of personality are given for study. Transliterations of the various Greek words into English letter equivalents are given, along with the number references from the Greek Dictionary portion of Strong's Concordance, for identification:

1. Perfect (*télios*, S-5046) - Full-grown, fully-developed, matured, or complete; fully accomplished in Christian enlightenment:

Mt 5:48    1 Co 2:6    1 Co 14:20    Ep 4:13    Phil 3:15    Col 1:28  
Col 4:12    He 5:14    Jas 1:4        Jas 3:2    1 Jn 4:18

2. Perfection (*teliótees*, S-5047) - Moral and spiritual perfection or completeness: Col 3:14, He 6:1-2.

3. To perfect (*telióo*, S-5048) - To complete, to make perfect or complete, to bring to maturity (of character) or completeness, to bring to the end or goal proposed, to develop fully:

Jn 17:23    2 Co 12:9-10    Phil 3:12    Heb 2:10    Heb 5:8-9    He 7:19, 28  
He 9:9      He 10:1, 14    He 11:40    He 12:23    Jas 2:22    1 Jn 2:5  
1 Jn 4:12    1 Jn 16-17, 18

4. To perfect (fully) (*epiteléo*, S-2005) - To complete (fully), to make (fully) perfect or complete, to accomplish, finish, fulfill, bring about, realize, perform, or bring to an end or goal: 2 Co 7:1, Ga 3:3, Phil 1:6.

5. Perfectly (*holoteleés*, S-3651) - Completely, perfect, complete in all respects, also complete to the end: 1 Th 5:23-24.

6. To perfect (*katartízo*, S-2675) - To complete, prepare, readjust, restore, render fit, put in order or in proper condition, equip or furnish completely, qualify fully, mend, repair, or adjust thoroughly:

Lk 6:40 2 Co 13:11 Ga 6:1 1 Th 3:10 He 13:21 1 Pe 5:10

7. Completeness (*panteleés*, S-3838) - Completely, perfectly, fully, wholly, entirely, absolutely, or utterly: He 7:25.
8. To establish (*bebaióo*, S-950) - To make firm or sure, strengthen, confirm, make steadfast, constant, and unwavering, fix on a firm basis: 1 Co 1:8, 2 Co 1:21, Col 2:7, He 13:9.
9. To establish (*steerízo*, S-4741) - To make stable, firm, or steadfast, to fix or place firmly, set or make fast, render constant, confirm, strengthen, or settle:

Lk 22:32 Ro 1:11 Ro 16:25 1 Th 3:2, 13 2 Th 2:17 2 Th 3:3  
Jas 5:8 1 Pe 5:10 2 Pe 1:12 Re 3:2

10. To cause to take root (*rizóo*, S-4492) - To strengthen with roots, to firmly root, firmly fix, establish, cause a person (figuratively) or thing to be firmly rooted, grounded, or fixed, to put on a firm foundation: Ep 3:17, Col 2:7 (both perfect passive participles).
11. To ground (*themelióo*, S-2311) - To found, to lay the foundation of, to found firmly, establish, make stable, render firm and unwavering, or settle: Ep 3:17 and Col 1:23 (both perfect passive participles), Mt 7:25, He 1:1, 1 Pe 5:10.
12. To form (*morphóo*, S-3445) - To shape, mold, fashion, to give form or shape to; used of the development of the embryo into the fully formed child; used of artists who shape their material into an image, especially an idol: Ga 4:19.
13. To strengthen (*krataiόo*, S-2901) - To make strong, to become strong, to increase in vigor, to empower, acquire strength, to be firm: Lk 1:80, 2:40 (of Jesus), 1 Co 16:13, Ep 3:16.
14. Steadfast (*hedraíos*, S-1476) - Firm, settled, constant, steady, or immovable, of those who are fixed in purpose: 1 Co 15:58, Col 1:23.
15. To confirm (*episteerízo*, S-1991) - To make or render more firm, to make stronger, to strengthen more, to support further, establish further or reestablish: Acts 14:22, 15:32, 41.

## Experiencing Maturity

From the above references we have gathered the passages that more particularly instruct us upon the nature and manner of experiencing a maturity of spiritual development or stability of life, as follows:

Mt 5:48	Lk 6:40	2 Co 1:21	2 Co 13:11	Ga 4:19	Ep 3:17
Ep 4:12-15	Phil 3:12-15	Col 1:23	Col 2:6-7	1 Th 3:12-13	1 Th 5:23
He 5:12-14	He 6:1	He 13:9	He 13:21	Jas 1:4	Jas 1:5-8
Jas 3:2	1 Pe 5:10				

Not included in the above list of words is the designation "*spiritual*", as describing a manner of life being lived in vital relation to God, as contrasted with "*the natural*" or soulish man (not reconciled to God) (1 Co 2:14-16, also Ga 6:1), and with the "*carnal*" or fleshy man (1 Co 3:1-3) as being an unestablished "*babe*" in Christ. We also have the spiritually unhealthy "*babe*" distinction made in He 5:12-14.

Of particular interest are the various Greek tenses used in the above list of passages. We have aorist tenses, indicating that climactic or sudden actions are being brought to pass in connection with our being established (as 1 Th 3:13 "*stablish*"), or an overall process is viewed as a climactic whole (as Ga 4:19 "*should be formed*"). We have present tenses, indicating that the established deliverance must be maintained (as He 13:9 "*established*" and Col 2:7 "*built up*" and "*stablished*").

Then of great interest we have perfect tenses, which involve a process, a climax, and the continued existence or influence of the climax (as Ep 3:17 "*rooted and grounded*" Col 1:23 "*grounded*" and Col 2:7 "*rooted*"). To convey the thought, Ep 3:17 would have to be rendered: "*Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love*". This would indicate that there is some sort of a climax involved in our becoming established in the spiritual walk of faith. Perhaps this is when we discover, with great blessing and thanksgiving, that faith in our risen Saviour really brings deliverance from temptation and sweet rest of heart amidst the turmoils of life. In answer to the question "*Who will separate us from the love of Christ?*" the Apostle Paul wrote "*I am convinced*" that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God (Ro 8:35-39), using the perfect tense. Perhaps the apostle is referring back to the climax of Ro 7:25.

## How to achieve this victory

### How is this matured spiritual life of victory over sin to be achieved?

The habitual life of spiritual deliverance is achieved when we learn the profound secret, through many sad experiences of defeat, that victory over our own selfishness and sin is accomplished by looking in faith to our heavenly Lord and Saviour in a climax of self-renunciation at critical moments of evil suggestions or temptations. According to the promises of the Gospel, when this is done the energizing power of the indwelling Holy Spirit is loosed within us in blessed worshipful victory. "*BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH*" (Ro 1:17, He 10:38).

We must not only learn the "*how*" but also the "*when*". We must not only learn how to look to the Lord in faith but must become sharpened in our spiritual perception and sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we instantly recognize when we need to look to the Lord for deliverance.

Spiritual rest is attained through Holy Spirit illumined contemplation of our heavenly Master (2 Co 3:18). This illumination takes place when with tear-stained defeat we look to the Saviour "*the author and finisher of our faith*" (He 12:2). When we recognize our personal failures and want deliverance enough to arouse ourselves to seek the face of God for whatever we need to know and do, with great joy God will lead us and grant our request.

We may summarize the detailed steps involved in achieving this wonderful fullness of life, where "*we walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Co 5:7) and where "*his working*" is working in us "*mightily*" (Col 1:29), by saying that it is a development that comes about:

1. Through the enlightenment, affectionate pleadings, and continual guidance of the Holy Spirit:

Jn 16:13   Ro 8:14   Ro 8:26-27   1 Co 10:13   Phil 2:13   1 Jn 2:20, 27

2. Through the loving fellowship and ceaseless intercession of our glorified Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:

Mt 28:20   Lk 22:32   Jn 10:3-4   Jn 17:9, 11, 15, 17   He 7:25   1 Jn 2:1

3. Through the help and prayer of other Christians who have learned to practise spiritual victory and a ministry of faith: Ga 4:19, Ep 3:14-19, Col 1:9, 4:12, 1 Th 5:23.

4. Through our own longing and sincere determination to grow or mature in our spiritual life and have victory over all obstacles: Mt 5:6, 1 Pe 2:2, 2 Pe 3:18.

5. Through diligent and prayerful application of our minds to the revealed truth of God, so that we may become greatly enlarged in our understanding of our moral relations to God and man and of our antagonists:

Mt 4:4   Jn 8:32   Jn 17:17, 19   Phil 1:9-11   Col 1:9-12   2 Pe 1:5-8

6. Through a thorough arousing of our minds to a new energy of perception and observation: Ep 5:14, He 5:14, 1 Pe 1:13.

In He 5:14, we have a perfect tense, with a verb which means to be trained or disciplined vigorously, trained as in gymnastic discipline, and may be rendered: "*But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil*".

7. Through the painstaking moment by moment application of our aroused and developed perception to recognize tendencies and occasions of temptation before they become strong enough to challenge us: Ep 5:15-16, Phil 1:9-10, He 5:14.

In Phil 1:9-10, we read: "*that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ*". In He 5:14, the senses are to be exercised vigorously "*to discern good and evil*".

8. Through the willingness and know-how of instant self-renunciation and the look of faith to our heavenly Lord and Saviour for immediate deliverance, thanking Him in advance for glorious victory:

Ro 6:11    Ro 6:13, 19    Ro 12:1    He 12:2    1 Pe 1:5    1 Jn 5:4  
Col 1:11    1 Co 15:57

Reconciliation to God took place when our wills responded to truth or intelligence. Likewise, spiritual victory and the establishment of Christian consistency must involve the highest exercise of intelligence. If we want spiritual victory because of the consequences that sinful indulgence brings, we will be left to grind away at our own mill.

We must turn from sin because of its relative emptiness and utter inconsistency with the great moral worth that we see ourselves to have in our relationships to the great God and the universe. Sin can only be defeated by contrast. To view our true moral worth to God and the universe of moral beings is like shaking a beautiful rattle before a small child, who quickly puts down a harmful toy that we wish to rid him of. When our concepts are enlarged so that we really see that manner of life in solemn relationship to the great benevolent God and our fellow men that is worth living, we put down with joyful relief those gratifications which are inconsistent with this Divine eternal viewpoint. When sinful-gratification is viewed as the real value in life, it is a struggle to deny ourselves and give it up. But when by contrast these gratifications are seen to be totally inconsistent with the Divine perspective of our moral worth, the struggle to give up the unworthy ceases.

## Automatic deliverance from sin?

**Is the achievement of spiritual maturity any kind of a permanent state of being, where deliverance from sin is automatic, without the confident abiding in Christ?**

Spiritual victory is not something that we achieve by ourselves in a state of isolation, something that we have as a personal possession. Rather, it is an achieved state of relationship with God. Christ is the Head, we are the body (Ep 5:23, 30). Just as our head is the nerve centre and source of life, so our Lord is the source of spiritual life through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Obviously, therefore, if we stupidly rebel against and forsake the source of life, we will have nothing left except an agonizing memory of what was.

To be "*protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Pe 1:5), is to be "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pe 1:4). Just as the power from the generating station passes into our electrical appliances when they are plugged into the line, so the life of God flows into the life of faith to deliver from the lesser appeals of our former self-hood. The power flow ceases if the line connection is broken. Just so, the Divine energy and life ceases to dominate and deliver us from the appeals of selfishness, if we choose the gratifications of sin or cease to maintain the look of faith. Continual deliverance depends upon our having learned the secret of continual abiding in Christ, and, therefore, is not automatic. "*Without me you can do nothing*", said the Saviour (Jn 15:5). "*You therefore,*



*beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pe 3:17).*

The modern Hovercraft rides smoothly and swiftly above the churning waves of the sea by a continuous blast of air directed downward under a surrounding enclosure and by a large propeller thrust at the rear. The comfort and speed of the craft depends upon the continuous operation of the engines.

If the engines are shut off, the craft will rest down upon the turbulent waves and be tossed to and fro. The turbulent sea may be likened to the disturbing encounters of life, which often bring a fluttering response of one sort or another in our emotional reactions. As with the Hovercraft, our spiritual deliverance rests upon a steadfast abiding in Christ. If the flow of life and power becomes shut off, the turmoil and chaos of our former lives will rise up to do us battle and bring us back into bondage, if possible. We are left to grit our teeth and fight the waves, so to speak, in our own strength because we have lost the buoyancy of Gospel deliverance.

There is, however, a deepening of affection towards those we have loved. God experiences this and refers to His submissive spiritual children as *"beloved"* (Col 3:12), for example, where we have a perfect tense, *"having come to be and continuing to be beloved"*, involving some kind of a personal attachment or development of love. The broken but restored Apostle Peter said thrice to his loving Lord, *"You know that I love You"* (Jn 21:15-17).

He used the word for affectionate love and refused to use the word for objective virtuous love that the Lord twice used. In His third question, *"Simon. . . do you love Me?"* our Lord changed to Peter's word for affectionate love. Perhaps Peter was so warmly attached to his loving Master for His double rescue of his soul, that he could only think in terms of the deep affection of his heart for his loving Friend. O sweet conquest of the pure virtuous and yet affectionate love of God: *"You are My friends if you do what I command you"* said the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls (Jn 15:14).

The walk through life becomes more and more blessed as He talks with us *"by the way"*. The two discouraged Emmaus disciples said, *"Was not our heart burning within us as He was speaking to us in the way, and as He was opening to us the Scriptures?"* (Lk 24:32). The tenses indicate a continuous duration of blessing. Attachment deepens with fellowship and continually makes abiding in Christ easier and departure into sin more stupid and unlikely. There is a new sweetness in God's reasonable requirements, a new trustfulness, a new relaxation that knows no termination of development. *"Perfect love casts out fear. . . the one who fears is not perfected in love"* (1 Jn 4:18).



**Must participate in God's Loving purposes and activities**

- *"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Co 3:9).*
- *"We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Co 5:20).*
- *"I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some" (1 Co 9:22, Paul).*
- *"For this purpose also I labour, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me" (Col 1:29, Paul).*
- *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8).*
- *"With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).*
- *"They were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking" (Acts 6:10, Stephen).*
- *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zech 4:6).*

We have seen that the Lord Jesus viewed the winning of one soul as of such great value that all the possessions of the world would not balance it. As He was departing into heaven in resurrection glory, He commissioned His own spiritual children to be His representatives on earth. The progress of the Gospel was dependent upon their sincerity and efforts. They must represent Him not only in word and truth but in manner of life and approach. Men would judge the Godhead by the disciples of Christ. Abundant provisions were made and bestowed upon the servants of Christ to endue them with power for deliverance and holy living. They must also be supernaturally endued by the Holy Spirit in wisdom and understanding to present the truth of God. *"For we are God's fellow workers" (1 Co 3:9).* The representatives of God must speak God's message in God's way.

Exactly what is spoken and how it is spoken will make a great difference, because men are subject to moral influence and effective presentation of truth. *"For it will be given you in that hour what you are to say",* said the Lord Jesus (Mt 10:19-20). We are to be *"watchmen"* for God and *"hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me"* (Eze 3:17). God desires that His

servants should be *"wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"* (Mt 10:16). When the religious leaders perceived the wisdom and boldness of Peter and John, *"they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13). Paul was not accused of being ignorant, but as having *"much learning"* (Acts 26:24). He had spent countless hours in the presence of the living Christ. He spoke *"words of sober truth"* (Acts 26:25). *"You are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing"* (Jn 15:5).

## Purpose of the Godhead

### What are the Members of the Godhead seeking to accomplish?

Common sense can only dictate that if God is going to energize us in our ministry and witness, He can only do this in proportion as we are labouring in accordance with His will and purpose. It is to be feared that many zealous Christians are unwittingly opposing the very effort that they are giving themselves for by failing to discern clearly the mind of God as revealed in His Word. The Lord Jesus said to the strongly religious Pharisees: *"And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition"* (Mt 15:6). Theological tradition and philosophies are a great hindrance if they are not based upon a simple interpretation of the Word of God. We stress the word *"simple"*, for the Bible is a plain message to plain people and develops simple concepts of truth that we are to live by. In connection with labouring for God, we have the admonition in 1 Co 3:9-15 that much of our effort may be *"burned"*. This passage does not have to do with so-called worldly Christians, but with those who are labouring unwisely for God not according to God's heart nor the true terms of salvation. They think they have won multitudes to Christ which God will not be able to recognize.

It is God's objective that the whole world should be saved, as was brought out in connection with repentance and the Atonement. This is in line with the obvious truth advanced that it was never God's will that sin should have spread its darkening veil over the world in the first place. We need never pray, *"Lord, if it be Your will, save such a one"*. If we do, we will be like the Pharisee who *"stood and prayed with himself"*. God cannot join in such a prayer. The Lord Jesus prayed, *"Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"* (Mt 6:10). God commands and anxiously desires that all men should repent, submit to His transforming grace and be forgiven through faith, and enter into the joy of His presence: Acts 17:30-31, 2 Pe 3:9, 1 Tim 2:4, 1 Jn 2:17.

## How to lead someone to repentance

### How is a person brought to repentance and salvation? What agencies are involved?

We have seen that Scripture reveals the sad fact that no one is seeking after God out of his own initiative to be reconciled and forgiven. Not a person on earth would ever be saved, therefore, apart from the investment of great effort on the part of some one else. *"The kindness of God*

*leads you to repentance?"* (Ro 2:4). Christians are more than mere instruments that God uses to further His work. *"For we are God's fellow workers"* (1 Co 3:9), or are we God's laborers? We are active voluntary agents who are to go forth in the name of the Lord *"for the destruction of fortresses"* (2 Co 10:4). *"And he who is wise wins souls"* (Prov 11:30). The following three agencies co-operate together in bringing about the salvation of a soul:

1. The Holy Spirit as the Divine Agent in great mercy enlightens every man as to his moral obligations, seeks to restrain every man from sin, exerts powerful convictions of guilt, manifests the moving love of God through the Gospel proclamation, and seeks to persuade all to renounce sin and be saved:

Ge 3:8-10   Ge 6:3                      Prov 1:24   Is 1:18   Is 55:2-3   Eze 33:11  
 Jer 25:31   Lk 14:17-18, 23   Lk 19:10   Jn 1:9   Jn 4:23   Jn 12:32  
 Jn 16:8-11   Acts 7:51                      1 Th 5:19   Re 3:20

2. God's servants as free moral agents make choice to exert similar persuasion and have an active part in turning men from disobedience to obedience, and in addition have the privilege of prayer to travail with God over souls:

Ge 6:8 (2 Pe 2:5)   Hos 10:12   Jon 3:4                      Mt 3:2, 8                      Mt 28:19  
 Lk 14:23                      Lk 16:15   Jn 15:16                      Acts 26:18, 20, 28   Ro 11:14  
 1 Co 9:19-23                      2 Co 5:11   Jas 5:19-20

3. The sinner, who is able to resist all the measures that can be taken toward his salvation, must of his own free will as a moral agent respond to the truth, break down his heart before God, and turn from all known sin in response to the appeals of the Godhead and the servants of God:

Acts 17:30-31   Is 55:7   Eze 14:6   Eze 18:30-32   Lk 13:3, 5   Acts 2:38  
 Acts 3:19                      20:21   Ep 5:14

4. The truth as revealed in the Word of God, the Bible, is used as an instrument by both the Holy Spirit and the servants of God in this process of moral enlightenment and persuasion:

Ps 19:7   Lk 8:11   Jn 8:32   He 4:12   1 Pe 1:23

## God's way of proceeding

### What has been God's manner of approach in seeking to turn men from sin into a warm-hearted Divine relationship?

The Godhead have approached sinful man by patiently reasoning with man over the issues of life and eternal truth. The only way that the heart of man can be humbled in true repentance is for man to be led to reason out his situation and his obligations and come to intelligent conclusions. All professed humility which is not based upon a satisfying understanding of the

problems of life is superficial. The Bible inspires the mind to think through every problem and doubt.

When we understand God's point of view and intelligently acknowledge our true rebellion and false accusations against God, then for the first time with openness and honesty we can meet God "*face to face*" over the sin question in our lives.

*"Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them. . . "* (Le 1:1-2). Later on the question was raised: *"Is there any word from the Lord?"*. And Jeremiah said, *"There is. . . "* (Jer 37:17). With great effort God invites men to reason out their situation with an eternal viewpoint and understand the requirements of the Gospel, and sends forth His ambassadors to do likewise, with the promise that the Word of God will bear fruit. Man is admitted into the secrets of the Godhead, with the promise that the Holy Spirit will enlighten our minds and reason with us as we read. God wishes us to understand why it has taken so many "*ages*". The Bible is not an account of the arbitrariness of God, but of the reasonableness of God. God was under no obligation to reveal all that He has of the Divine secrets, but has done so to inspire confidence in man that He is a God of intelligence and truth. God must win man through an enlightened understanding so that man will declare himself "*without excuse*" and capitulate to the overtures of God's mercy.

The following passages of Scripture are examples of God's intelligent approach toward man in seeking to persuade men to turn from sin:

- Ge 6:13, 7:1 - God explained to Noah the reason for the flood and for His plans.
- Ge 18:17-19 - When Sodom and Gomorrah were about to be destroyed, God revealed to Abraham the reasons. Then went on that wonderful intercession when Abraham reasoned with God. God was prayed down from 50 to 10 righteous as a condition of sparing these cities (Ge 18:23-33). Who knows whether the great compassion of God could have been prayed down to 5 or less, if Abraham's confidence in God's goodness had been greater?
- Ex 3:7-15, 4:1-9 - Think how God reasoned with Moses in his call to deliver Israel when Moses hesitated.
- Ex 32:9-14 - Consider how Moses reasoned with God in his greatest intercessory prayer when God was determined to destroy Israel over the golden calf rebellion. Moses had the opportunity to replace Abraham as the head of a nation, but humbly declined. God harkened to his petition (Ex 30-33).
- 1 Sam 12:6-7 - Samuel reasoned with the nation Israel in behalf of God when they were determined to have a king. He reviewed some of the main points of God's dealings with them (1 Sam 12:8-12) and stated their present case (1 Sam 12:13-15). Samuel had many times of blessed fellowship with God during these times of stress (1 Sam 8:6-9, 15:10-11).
- 2 Kgs 20:1-7 - King Hezekiah of Judah reasoned with God to be healed and had given to him an extension of life.
- Is 1:18-20 - God desires to reason with man about his own situation and the invitation of reconciliation being extended.

- Is 41:21 - God beckoned to Israel to give reasons for their disobedience and their rejection of mercy, if they could.
- Is 43:22-26 - Again we have God inviting an examination of the situation.
- Is 55:8-9 - God seeks to lift man's "*thoughts*" to the level of His, particularly on the necessity of repentance (Is 55:6-7).
- Jer 2:1-5, 13 - Think of this tender pleading on the part of the great God for man to reason on the foolishness of his ways.
- Jer 29:10-14 - God thinks "*thoughts*" of good-will towards man, and strongly desires man to know His "*processes of thought*".
- Micah 6:2 - God not only invites man to think with Him upon their differences, but "*reasons*" with man to do so.
- Ro 8:32 - Here the Apostle Paul expresses his great confidence in the goodness and mercy of God.
- 1 Co 2:9-13 - The Word of God was designed to be an intelligent communication from the Holy Spirit to our spiritual understanding so "*that we may know the things freely given to us by God*" (1 Co 2:12).
- He 4:12-13 - God designed His Word to be so plain that it would pierce through the mental "*fog*" which we have generated for ourselves and bring full understanding of ourselves, when read with humility in the illumination of the Holy Spirit.
- Re 1:1-2 - God has taken great pains to reveal many details of the future course of this world, which He knows must end in judgment.

## Focus of the Apostles and Servants of Christ

### What was the approach of the Apostles and servants of Christ in New Testament times, and particularly the Apostle Paul?

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection: "*Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you*" (Jn 20:21). The Apostle Paul received a most energetic commission (Acts 26:17-19), in response to which he could faithfully say: "*I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision*" (Acts 26:19). Men must "*repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance*". His God-appointed task was "*to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God*" by powerful, Spirit anointed reasoning on the truth of God. Thus the early servants of Christ went forth to persuade men to repent and embrace the Gospel by reasoning with them "*with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven*" (1 Pe 1:12).

- Acts 2:4-11 - On the Day of Pentecost they spoke forth with great learning and intelligence *"the wonderful works of God"* in languages which they had never learned, after the Holy Spirit was granted according to the promise of the risen Christ (Acts 1:8).
- Acts 4:2, 4, 8, 13 - Peter and John, with a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, reasoned with the people with such conviction that great numbers were converted to the Gospel, the church now expanding to about 5000 men (no doubt plus a great number of women and older children). The conclusion of the rulers was that they spoke with such brilliance and persuasion that they must have had some direct connection with the greatest teacher that they ever heard, Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 4:13).
- Acts 5:19-20, 25, 29, 33, 42 - Peter and other Apostles were miraculously delivered from prison to continue their persuasive teaching (backed up by miracles as Christ promised, Mk 16:17-20), with such force that those who refused to submit *"were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them"*. The Apostles were so satisfied in the revealed truth of God that they said with overflowing enthusiasm: *"We must obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29).
- Acts 6:10 - The religious opposition who were disputing with Deacon Stephen *"a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 6:5), were completely defeated and had to resort to violence. *"They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke"*. Their violence turned out to be for Stephen's good, for he received a home-going from his kind Master that he might not have otherwise known (Acts 7:55-56, 59-60), as he sweetly *"fell asleep"*. In his going he no doubt did irreparable damage to a violently intelligent young man named Saul (Acts 7:58), who could not but have been confounded with his Spirit-given reasoning powers and compassionate departure from this life.
- Acts 17:30 - *"God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent"*. This was the heart and commission of Paul's message. This repentance, apart from which was no salvation, was such a change of mind that a changed life always resulted. There was only one final approach to such a revolution of life, only through the reason as the powerful claims of truth were presented. Thus the great Apostle Paul went everywhere with God-given intellectual understanding to confound men's minds.
- Acts 17:2-3 - This is how the fervent church in Thessalonica was founded.
- Acts 18:4, 11 - Likewise at Corinth, where he *"reasoned"* and *"persuaded"*.
- Acts 19:8-10, 20 - Likewise at Ephesus, where he spoke *"boldly. . . disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. . . daily"*.
- Acts 24:25 - The Roman ruler Felix was overwhelmingly convinced but refused to submit to God. Paul had reasoned on the principles of God's moral government.
- Acts 26:24-25, 28-29 - King Agrippa concluded that Paul's Spirit-anointed persuasion showed *"much learning"* and said: *"In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian"*.



## Releasing God's Wisdom and Energy

### How does the wisdom and energy of God come to be released through the servants of Christ?

As Christian workers we can accomplish nothing except we labour *"together with God"*. The Lord Jesus, after illustrating how penetrating salvation must be by the camel and the needle, was confronted with the question, from His amazed disciples: *"Who then can be saved?"* Our Lord bluntly said: *"With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible"* (Mk 10:26-27).

Viewing this same most difficult problem on a later occasion, He said: *"Without me you can do nothing"* (Jn 15:5). The servants of Christ need Divine wisdom which they do not possess (Prov 11:30). In our relationship to our risen Saviour we find *"treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (Col 2:3), which will be imparted to us as we walk day by day in the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the Word of God.

In his life of making known the treasures of the Gospel to the world, the Apostle Paul described both his own energetic activity and the mighty power of God upon him: *"For this purpose also I labour, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me"* (Col 1:29). The Lord Jesus promised the mighty *"power"* of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), just before His departure into heaven. This power was greatly manifested in the Pentecostal outpouring, when all the disciples who had banded together (about 120) presented the claims of God fluently to the multitudes gathered in the Temple area, in languages which they had never learned. Peter concluded the powerful manifestation, which resulted in multitudes being *"pricked in their heart"* in great urgency to, be saved.

In Acts 4:8, Peter again experienced a climax of being filled with the Holy Spirit, as he was called to defend himself before the rulers. The rulers immediately perceived the boldness and power manifested through Peter and John (Acts 4:13). After they were released and returned to the company of the disciples, an earnest united prayer brought a further infilling upon all and *"began to speak the word of God with boldness"* (Acts 4:31). It appears that there was no once-for-all filling of the Holy Spirit, but that God expects us to look to the Holy Spirit in faith for a climax of power to meet the occasion of service or deliverance. This is what the Lord Jesus had promised (Mt 10:19-20).

1. We must distinguish between the gift or bestowment of the Holy Spirit upon repentant believers to become the indwelling Comforter, Illuminator, and Energizer, as promised by the Lord Jesus, and the future unending gifts of the Holy Spirit for ministries or Christian service. We are not to look upon any single infilling of the Holy Spirit as any kind of a final climax of God-consciousness, as though we had arrived at a certain plateau of spiritual elevation, but are to press onward and upward to greater and greater heights of mighty power within our lives to flow out to a needy world.

This attitude was expressed by the Apostle Paul in Phil 3:8-15. Let us always remember that there is no such thing as an infilling of the Holy Spirit in mighty power for Christian service without that infilling first purifying our whole inner being (Acts 15:8-9).

God's power cannot flow through contaminated channels. God will not grant His power so that selfish pride may be elevated. This is what Simon wanted, as recorded in Acts 8:18-24, calling forth Peter's stern rebuke. James wrote that "*you ask with wrong motives*" if we want to consume God's bestowments upon our own desires (Jas 4:3). We may make professions of great gifts, but the calm reality of God's mighty power will be absent. God cannot and will not contribute to our selfish indulgence.

2. The functioning of the Church of Christ is distinguished from that of the nation Israel, in that God's program now is for the whole Church as "*the body of Christ*" to be an integral operating unit, animated by the indwelling Holy Spirit, whereas Israel functioned primarily by an endowed leadership. If we study the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times, we find that all the essential New Testament gifts were functioning there among chosen leaders, often times without regard to their personal uprightness. But in this glorious Gospel age, the prayer of Moses (Nu 11:29) has been answered, at least in God's plan for the Church. God's plan now is that every single member of "*the body of Christ*" should humble and even prostrate himself before his Lord to become partaker of some gift of the Holy Spirit for the mutual edification of the whole Church and the furtherance of the Lord's work (1 Co 12:7). All are to "*desire earnestly the best gifts*" (1 Co 12:31). We have here a most urgent admonition, the word meaning to burn with zeal for, aspire eagerly after, or be ardently devoted to, the greater (the more exalted or important) gifts of grace. This diversity of operation is illustrated in the different kind of members composing our human body, all of which are necessary (1 Co 12:14-27). Spiritual gifts, then, are to be the rule in the Church, not the exception, with every true member participating.
3. In connection with spiritual gifts, it is most important that we understand two central facts concerning their bestowal:

- (a) Spiritual gifts are modes of operation of the Holy Spirit within and through us, and not deposits given to us as our own possession and independent control and use, as we choose. This is brought out in 1 Co 12:4-11, where we have present tenses of durative action, "*to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*" (1 Co 12:7).

*"For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit" (1 Co 12:8). "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (1 Co 12:11).*

We do not travel to some place to receive a particular gift of the Holy Spirit, therefore, with the idea of carrying it back with us as some kind of possession, because if the Holy Spirit does not come back with us and operate through us day by day there will be no gift. We are like light-bulbs through which electrical power is manifested. We partake first of the illumination and then pass it on to others, and thus the work of the Holy Spirit within us becomes a part of us, always to reside in our memories. But if the switch is turned off, we have nothing left but our memories to torment us, somewhat like the disciples in their walk to Emmaus after the risen

Saviour had left them (Lk 24:32), although they had no guilt as we would have if we grieved the Holy Spirit into ineffectiveness.

- (b) The Holy Spirit is absolutely sovereign as to what gifts He may choose to manifest in each one of us. As quoted above, He is *"distributing to each one individually just as He wills"* (1 Co 12:11).

In this individual choice for each one of us, the blessed Holy Spirit is not in the least arbitrary. He evaluates our characteristics and qualities, with the care of the potter mending a valuable vessel, and decides wherein we can best serve for the glory of God and the blessing of our fellow men. Then He operates within us in this direction. Do we know enough of ourselves to tell Him what gift we want? Do we know what the greatest specific need is? Do we know where we can best serve our blessed Lord? If not, then let us humble ourselves for the Holy Spirit's directive *"toward that which is profitable (advantageous or expedient)"* (1 Co 12:7). The kind Master saw what He could make out of an oscillating and eccentric Simon and called him Peter (a little rock) ahead of time (Mt 16:18). We all are, however, *"to desire earnestly the best (or greater) gifts"* (1 Co 12:31), which are defined for us in this chapter (1 Co 12:7-11, 28-30).

4. The following enumerations of spiritual gifts appear in the New Testament, some of which have been quoted or referred to. *"The body of Christ"* is to function as a unit to the glory of God through the animating Holy Spirit, who conveys the life of the risen Christ to us as our Head. There are no divisions in *"the body of Christ"* as to any who have a special status or class distinction, although there is a called-out ministry who are to take the earthly leadership through the direction of the Holy Spirit.
  - (a) Ep 4:7, 11-16 - Here we notice that the saints are to do the greater part of the ministering or Christian service of one form or another, and that *"pastors and teachers"* (apparently one office) are to prepare and guide them in their service.
  - (b) 1 Co 12:7-11 - The general concept seems to be that each one of us will possess or receive the Holy Spirit's operation in only a few of these gifts, and to possess all nine-would be an extreme rarity. Then again, the Holy Spirit may stress one area of operation in our lives, or in the Church at large, at one period and another at a different period.
  - (c) 1 Co 12:28-31 - This passage establishes beyond any question the Divine order of importance of the various spiritual gifts. The gifts are viewed as embodied in individuals, established or appointed in the Church.
  - (d) Ro 12:8 - The expression *"according to the proportion of the faith"* indicates our response and initiative in bringing about a greater maturity and development in spiritual gifts.

**Where is the limit of the look of faith?**



# A

# The Light

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- **“Light” the universal standard of conduct for God and Man.**

True life is a voluntary choice to live according to what is right and true in our moral relations - *“the light of life”* (Jn 8:12).

- **God is “Light” in the absolute sense.**

Because the Godhead are living according to the dictates of Their absolute intelligence in all Their relations - God *“is in the light”* (1 Jn 1:7).

The three greatest statements about God in the Bible appear to be:

1. **God is Spirit** - God’s essential immaterial essence (Jn 4:24).
2. **God is Love** - perfection of motive or voluntary character (1 Jn 4:8, 16).
3. **God is Light** - perfection of conduct because of perfection of knowledge and perfection of motive (1 Jn 1:5).

**God is, therefore, the source of all moral enlightenment** - *“Whatever does make manifest is light”* (Ep 5:13).

- **Our Lord Jesus put the moral “Light” of the Godhead on exhibition.**

He could say, *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (Jn 6:38).

He put the Godhead on exhibition and could say, *“He that has seen me has seen the Father”* (Jn 1:18, 14:9-11).

As a result of His perfect conduct in all the struggles of life, He could say: *“I am the Light of the world”* - perfection of motive and conduct demonstrated (Jn 8:12).

*“The life was the light of men”* (Jn 1:4), *“Which one of you convicts Me of sin?”* a challenge to His enemies (Jn 8:46).

*“Who did not sin”* - His claims to Deity were the only charges that could be made against Him (1 Pe 2:22, Jn 10:33), *“He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life”* (Jn 8:12).

- **Those reconciled to God are now “The Light of the world”.**

They became such by being willing to allow the *“light”* of God’s truth to expose their past life of *“darkness”* and turning toward God in repentance with a commitment of faith toward the suffering Saviour (Jn 3:19-21):

*"I am come that they might have life", said the Saviour (Jn 10:10).*

*"Now are you light in the Lord, walk as children of light" (Ep 5:8).*

*"You are all the children of light, and the children of the day" (1 Th 5:5).*

*"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 Jn 1:7).*

*"He who practices the truth comes to the Light" (Jn 3:21).*

*"Let us . . . love . . . in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18).*

*"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God" (1 Jn 3:21).*

*"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).*

Our Lord said concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit that He was to *"convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, . . . because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me"* (Jn 16:8, 10).

There was to be a new relationship in the Holy Spirit: *"He abides with you and will be in you"* (Jn 14:17).

The Holy Spirit was to empower the lives of believers to live in victory over sin and to guide them *"into all truth"* (Jn 16:13).

*"It is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit",* was the Saviour's promise (Mk 13:11).

Because of Divine wisdom and boldness, the rulers *understood* of Peter and John began to *"recognize them as having been with Jesus"* (Acts 4:13).

Because of this new dynamic relationship, we are to take the place of our Lord on earth and be *"the light of the world"* (Mt 5:14).

# B

# The Bible

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## **The Bible: The Divine - Human Word of God.**

*"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:32).*

**Every time truth is rejected, there is a loss of substance.** The rebellion of man down through the early centuries had brought about such a deterioration of truth *"that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"*, except for Noah (Ge 6:8). *"God so loved the world"* and longed to rescue as many as possible *"Out of darkness into his marvellous light"* (1 Pe 2:9). This process of imparting truth to lost mankind was exceedingly difficult. No mechanical recording of facts would avail anything, since truth had to be understood and digested. This is impossible except the learner will agree to modify his life as the concepts of truth unfold. This involved great Divine humiliation to develop human channels so that revelation of intimacy would not lead to sinful exaltation, which would prevent comprehension. This Divine problem is recorded in the life of the Apostle Paul (2 Co 12:7-10), God's greatest secrets can only be imparted to the humblest channels. How can man be brought back to reality so he is willing to humble himself to his proper stature and be willing to be reconciled into the great and glorious domain of the Godhead of truth?

After finding and developing responsive channels of truth, the process of bringing about final concepts of truth has been by:

- **Concept or Vision of Truth.**

Responsive channels of truth had to be given profound experiences of the Divine presence to astonish them with awe and awaken a true perspective or realization as to how great and holy God is and how small and deficient they are:

Ge 15:1, 5-6    Ex 3:2-6    Job 42:5-6    Is 6:1-5    Mt 16:15-17  
Mt 17:1-8    Acts 26:12-16    1 Co 9:1    Re 1:9-18

- **Revelation or Impartation of Truth.**

This has been a time-consuming process in history during which God slowly imparted His truth, His will, and His plans to humble leaders by developing a variety of circumstances and tangible illustrations of spiritual concepts.

The most profound impartation was the Incarnation which impersonated truth in our circumstances, with the accomplishment of redemption and resurrection. *"The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"* (Jn 1:17):

Ge 12:1, 7    Ex 19:3    Ex 24:15-18    Nu 12:6-8    Mt 5-7  
 Mk 3:13-15    Jn 16:12-15    Ga 1:11-18    Ep 3:3-5    Re 1:1-3  
 Re 1:10-11    Re 1:19

- **Inspiration or Recording of Truth.**

A mysterious Divine-human activity in which historical facts as well as profound revelations of truth were recorded by human authors, who selected their material and their words under the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that facts were inerrantly recorded. This involves what evil men have said and done as well as those in submission to God. Even complaints and vindictive attitudes of spiritual leaders are recorded, leaving us to conclude that these often were not God's governmental attitudes. Inspiration has to do with the accuracy of the record. We must decide by study, meditation, and prayer where God has spoken and where man has spoken. Weaknesses and failings of great spiritual leaders are recorded, an added evidence of inspiration. John wrote profound truth from his simple vocabulary. Luke and Paul from theirs of greater learning a genius of the Holy Spirit's operations:

Ex 4:10-12    Ex 24:3    Le 1:1    1 Sam 3:21    2 Sam 23:2-3  
 Ps 19:7-9    Ps 119:11    Is 1:2, 10    Zech 1:3-4    Mt 5:17-18  
 Mk 12:35-37    Lk 24:25-27    Lk 24:44-47    Jn 16:13-15    1 Co 2:9-13  
 2 Tim 3:16    1 Pe 1:10-12    2 Pe 1:21    Re 1:11, 19    Re 1:10-11  
 Re 1:19

- **Illumination or Enlightenment of Truth.**

The Holy Spirit will guide humble minds to understand revealed and recorded truth:

Mt 5:6    Lk 10:21-22    Jn 5:39    Jn 7:17    Jn 14:26  
 Jn 16:8-11    Jn 16:13-14    Ro 15:4    1 Co 2:12    Ep 5:17  
 Col 1:9-10    1 Jn 2:20, 27

- **Concept or Developed Perspective of Truth.**

Through study, meditation, and prayerful consideration, factual truth becomes a part of our personalities as we are led into concepts or perspectives of truth which are not reducible to words, which is the true objective of inspiration:

Acts 17:11    1 Tim 4:13-16    2 Tim 2:15    1 Pe 2:2-3    2 Pe 3:18

- **Ministry or Propagation of Truth.**

Through special called-out ministry and by all those reconciled to God:

Mk 3:14-15    Lk 10:2    Acts 6:3-4    Ep 4:11-15    2 Tim 2:1-2  
 Acts 2:42    Acts 8:4    1 Th 1:8





# Problems of Salvation

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## PROBLEMS OF SALVATION

Our continual indulgence in a supremely selfish or sinful life has brought about the following problems:

**THE GUILT PROBLEM** - Consequences of sin in God's moral government. How can man's sin be forgiven consistent with God's moral character and righteous obligations to all His moral creatures?

**THE SIN PROBLEM** - The impossibility of dealing with the consequences of sin while it is still going on. How can our wills, the very essence of our personalities, be persuaded to renounce with appropriate solemnness a completely wrong manner of life?

**THE MORAL DEFILEMENT PROBLEM** - The impossibility of living a relaxed life pleasing to God in doing His blessed will in our ruined estate, extending to our whole inner personality and its functions.

How can the strong bondage and slavery of the will to evil habits be revolutionized and attracted to virtuous occupation?

How can the mind or intellect, with the imagination, be purified from its corrupt habits and be inspired to a new approach to the profound possibilities of life?

How can the conscience be silenced from its condemnation of guilt and the memory from its haunting record?

How can the emotions be quieted from their insistent demands that wrongful experiences be perpetuated and indulged in with increasing adventure?

**THE SPIRITUAL MOTIVATION PROBLEM** - If glorious spiritual victory is to become a daily happy experience, man needs a new revitalizing or energizing force in his personality, to counteract the moral weakness that he has developed by the abuse of his personal endowments or his wrong established habits of conduct.

The revelation of the moral law gave man a written description of that conduct that was right and proper in all our moral relations, and thus pleasing to God and resulting in happiness of all moral beings.

But the written regulations lacked the impetus to bring about the fragrance and moral beauty of overcoming spiritual life (Ro 8:1-4). Man needed a "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col

1:27). He needed a provision whereby he could behold for himself the glory of the risen Christ in his inner personality and be continually transformed or transfigured thereby (2 Co 3:18). Just so, Christ was raised again for our continued justification or deliverance (Ro 4:25).

**THE TIME URGENCY PROBLEM** - This revolutionary moral change and reconciled relationship can only take place in man's present life of probation.

After death there is "*a great gulf fixed*", as the Lord Jesus so solemnly declared (Lk 16:26).

*"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment"* (He 9:27).

*"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Co 6:2).