

Knowledge of God Series – 3



THE REVELATION OF GOD

Ellen G. White
Spirit of Prophecy

1895-1898

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The things of nature upon which we look today give us but a faint conception of Eden's beauty and glory, but the natural world, with unmistakable voice, proclaims the glory of God. And in this book of nature opened to us—in the beautiful, scented flowers, in their varied and delicate coloring, God gives to us an unmistakable expression of His love for fallen man. After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth, seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thorns, the thistles, the tares, the law of condemnation is discerned, but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth.

Nature is filled with spiritual lessons for mankind. The flowers die only to spring forth into new life, and in this we are taught the lesson of the resurrection. All who love God will bloom again in the Eden above. But everything in nature cannot teach the lesson of the great and marvelous love of God. Therefore the Father sent His well-beloved Son into the world and with His own voice declared Him to be a perfect revelation of Himself to man.

To the question of Thomas, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, except by me. If ye have known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." [John 14:6-8.] The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork, but Philip could not accept nature as his God. "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father, which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." [Verses 9-11.]

We are to behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God has revealed Himself in Christ. In the person of His only begotten Son, the God of heaven has condescended

to stoop to our human nature. His voice has spoken from the highest heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Matthew 3:17.] And again, at the visit of the Greeks to the temple, when Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify thy name," the answer was given, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." [John 12:28-30.]

"Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." [Psalm 2:6, 7.] The Father in heaven has a voice and person which Christ expressed. Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter and the operations of nature as to overlook or refuse to acknowledge the continual working of God in nature. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has in itself no inherent power but that which God supplies. How strange then that so many should make a deity of nature.

God furnished the matter and the properties with which to carry out His plans. Nature is but the Lord's agency. The hand of God is continually guiding the globe in its mysterious march around the sun. The same hand that holds the mountains and balances them in position guides and keeps in order the respective planets. All these wonderful glories in the heavens are but doing the work appointed them. The great and mighty God employs His agencies that vegetation may flourish. He sends the dew and the rain and the sunshine that verdure may spring forth and spread its green carpet over the earth, that the shrubs and fruit trees may bud and blossom and bring forth. It is not to be supposed that a law is set in motion for the seed to work themselves, that the leaf appears because it must do so of itself. It is through the immediate agency of God that every tiny seed breaks through the earth and springs into life to give food to man. Every leaf grows, every flower blooms, through the working power of God.

The physical organism of man is under the supervision of God, but it is not like a clock which is set in operation and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath, but bear in mind that the being is under the supervision of God. Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. In God we live and move and have our being. Each heartbeat, each breath is the inspiration of that God who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, the inspiration of the ever present God, the great I AM.

Idolatry of nature is a farce, it is the invention of men who know not God and who are trying to keep out of sight a knowledge of the

true God. When Nehemiah proclaimed a fast, the Levites poured forth a confession of the greatness of God, “Thou, even thou art God alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all: and the host of heaven worshipeth thee.” [Nehemiah 9:6.]

The apostle Paul when holding forth the Word of life to the Athenians, and presenting before them the majesty of the living God in contrast to their idolatrous worship, declared; “God that made the world and all things that are therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things: and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being: as certain also of your own prophets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” [Acts 17:24-29.]

There is scarcely an operation of nature but we will find reference made to it in the Word of God. The Word declares, “He maketh the sun to arise, and the rain to descend.” [See Matthew 5:45 and Job 38:26.] He “maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains.” “He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.” “When he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens ... He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.” [Psalm 147:8, 16; Jeremiah 10:13.]

These words of holy writ say nothing of the independent laws of nature. God is the superintendent as well as the Creator of all things. The divine Being is engaged in upholding the things which He has created. God has laws which He has instituted, but they are only His servants through which He effects results. It is God who calls everything in order and keeps all things in motion.

Signs of the Times, April 11, 1895

Revelation of God through Christ

Those who possess the faith that works by love and purifies the soul will represent Christ, in whom their hope of eternal life is centered, by denying self, by sacrificing self for the good of those for whom Christ died. They will have the experience for which Paul bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

Those who have experienced the blessing of God should be the most grateful of persons. They should send up to God words of thanksgiving because Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might bring before the world the perfection of God in his own character. He came to represent God, not as a stern judge, but as a loving father. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God is love. This was the great truth that Christ came to the world to reveal. Satan had so misrepresented the character of God to the world, that man stood remote from God; but Christ came to display to the world the Father's attributes, to represent the express image of his person. "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." "This commandment have I received of my Father." The object of Christ's mission to the world was to reveal the Father.

The Lord Jesus is an example in all things. By the works which he did he made it plain that he was in council with the Father, and that he was in every move fulfilling the eternal purposes of God. In spirit, in works, in his whole earthly history, he revealed the mind and purpose of God toward his heritage among men. In his obedience to the law of God, he exemplified in his human nature the fact that the law is a transcript of divine perfection. In the gift of Christ to the world God would overwhelm fallen man with a marvelous manifestation of his great love wherewith he has loved us; but while he would that all should come to

repentance, the declaration no less expresses his character, that he will by no means clear the guilty. Should he give the least sanction to sin, his throne would be corrupted. At immense cost, he opens a way of refuge for the sinner, providing that through the work of the Holy Spirit man shall be transformed into an obedient child of God, a loyal subject of his kingdom. He who receives Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, also is provided with heavenly protection and heavenly light; for the angels of God are sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. The representation given to Jacob of a ladder whose base rested upon earth, and whose top reached to the throne of God; whereon ascended and descended the angels of heaven, is a representation of the plan of salvation. Had the ladder failed to connect with earth by one inch, the connection between earth and heaven would have been broken, and man would have been hopelessly lost. But the ladder is planted firmly upon the earth, that heaven may connect with earth, and that the fallen sons of men be redeemed and rescued. Christ is the ladder that Jacob saw, whose base is upon the earth, and whose topmost round reaches the throne of God. Down this ladder streams the glory of God, and on it ascend and descend the angels of heaven to communicate the light and the glory of God, whose train fills the temple, to the lost children of earth. Through Christ heavenly intelligences may communicate with human agents.

Christ declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christ alone can bridge the gulf that sin has made between earth and heaven, and make it possible to reach fallen man with the overtures of mercy. But through the merits of Christ, man has been given a second probation, that he may be tested and proved by another trial to see whether he will be obedient to all the commandments of God, and be brought back in freedom from sin, with his loyalty proved, to have a right to the tree of life, and to enter in through the gates into the city.

In order that man might be thus privileged, Christ, the divine Son of God, joined himself to human nature, that man might understand that the living true God would have every son and daughter of Adam a partaker of the divine nature through union with himself, and thus manifest to the world, to unfallen worlds, and to the synagogue of Satan, that the redemption of the fallen race is possible. God would have his children bear testimony to the fact that God cannot be satisfied until the fallen race is redeemed, reclaimed, and reinstated to their holy privileges, having free access to the tree of life. He would have them bear testimony to the fact that through the grace of Christ, they may represent Christ-likeness of character, and find greatest joy in the assurance of his great love wherewith he has loved us. Once separated from God by the lying

devices of Satan, they are reunited to him by learning the lesson of redeeming love, as manifested in the great sacrifice of Christ in giving his precious life for mankind. The human is united to the divine by a tie so strong that unfallen worlds, angels, and men are amazed, for those who believe in the love of God to them are secure in the refuge of his love, and not all the arts of Satan can induce them to continue in transgression of the law of God.

O, cannot the sinner understand that Christ clothed his divinity with humanity, in order that he might reach humanity? Can he not see that Jesus lived the life that all the human race may live, and that no soul shall enter the portals of bliss unless he obeys the laws of the kingdom of God? Christ made the law of God binding upon every soul, in order that, through obedience to the divine precepts, man might be brought back to loyalty to God. Every sinner converted to God must live in conformity to all the commandments of God. Jesus lived among men, consuming himself by continual self-denial and in labors of love. The fact that Christ lived among men in human nature is a testimony to us that God is with us. God dwells in every abode, hears every word that is uttered, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every man, regards the treatment that is given to father, mother, brother, sister, friend, and neighbor. He understands our necessities, and his beloved Son is the channel through which his love, mercy, and grace shall flow to satisfy our need.

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Review and Herald, November 8, 1898

The Revelation of God

“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Before the fall, not a cloud rested upon the minds of our first parents to obscure their clear perception of the character of God. They were perfectly conformed to the will of God. For a covering, a beautiful light, the light of God, surrounded them. The Lord visited the holy pair, and instructed them through the works of his hands. Nature was their lesson-book. In the garden of Eden the existence of God was demonstrated in the objects of nature that surrounded them. Every tree of the garden spoke to them. The invisible things of God were clearly seen, being understood by the things which were made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

But while it is true that God could thus be discerned in nature, this does not favor the assertion that after the fall a perfect knowledge of God was revealed in the natural world to Adam and his posterity. Nature could convey her lessons to man in his innocence; but transgression brought a blight upon nature, and intervened between nature and nature's God. Had Adam and Eve never disobeyed their Creator, had they remained in the path of perfect rectitude, they could have known and understood God. But when they listened to the voice of the tempter, and sinned against God, the light of the garments of heavenly innocence departed from them; and in parting with the garments of innocence, they drew about them the dark robes of ignorance of God. The clear and perfect light that had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light, the posterity of Adam could no longer trace the character of God in his created works.

The things of nature upon which we look today give us but a faint conception of Eden's beauty and glory; yet the natural world, with unmistakable voice, proclaims the glory of God. In the things of nature, marred as they are by the blight of sin, much that is beautiful remains. One omnipotent in power, great in goodness, in mercy, and love, has created the earth, and even in its blighted state it inculcates truths in regard to the skilful Master Artist. In this book of nature opened to us,—in the beautiful, scented flowers, with their varied and delicate coloring,—God

gives to us an unmistakable expression of his love. After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or he might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth, seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that his mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth.

Nature is filled with spiritual lessons for mankind. The flowers die only to spring forth into new life; and in this we are taught the lesson of the resurrection. All who love God will bloom again in the Eden above. But nature can not teach the lesson of the great and marvelous love of God. Therefore, after the fall, nature was not the only teacher of man. In order that the world might not remain in darkness, in eternal spiritual night, the God of nature met us in Jesus Christ. The Son of God came to the world as the revelation of the Father. He was that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." We are to behold "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

In the person of his only begotten Son, the God of heaven has condescended to stoop to our human nature. To the question of Thomas, Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

The most difficult and humiliating lesson that man has to learn is his own inefficiency in depending upon human wisdom, and the sure failure of his own efforts to read nature correctly. Sin has obscured his vision, and of himself he can not interpret nature without placing it above God. He can not discern in it God, or Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. He is in the same position as were the Athenians, who erected their altars for the worship of nature. Standing in the midst of Mars Hill, Paul presented before the people of Athens the majesty of the living God in contrast with their idolatrous worship.

"Ye men of Athens," he said, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ig-

norantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter or the operations of nature as to overlook, or refuse to acknowledge, the continual working of God in nature. Nature is not God, nor was it ever God. The voice of nature testifies of God, but nature is not God. As his created work, it simply bears a testimony to God's power. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies. There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son. And "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The psalmist says: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Some may suppose that these grand things in the natural world are God. They are not God. All these wonders in the heavens are only doing the work appointed them. They are the Lord's agencies. God is the superintendent, as well as the Creator, of all things. The divine Being is engaged in upholding the things that he has created. The same hand that holds the mountains and balances them in position, guides the worlds in their mysterious march around the sun.

There is scarcely an operation of nature to which we may not find reference in the word of God. The word declares that "he maketh his sun to rise," and "the rain to descend." He "maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.... He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: ... he sendeth out his

word, and melteth them; he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow." "He maketh lightnings for the rain; and bringeth the wind out of his treasuries."

These words of Holy Writ say nothing of the independent laws of nature. God furnishes the matter and the properties with which to carry out his plans. He employs his agencies that vegetation may flourish. He sends the dew and the rain and the sunshine, that verdure may spring forth, and spread its carpet over the earth; that the shrubs and fruit-trees may bud and blossom and bring forth. It is not to be supposed that a law is set in motion for the seed to work itself, that the leaf appears because it must do so of itself. God has laws that he has instituted, but they are only the servants through which he effects results. It is through the immediate agency of God that every tiny seed breaks through the earth, and springs into life. Every leaf grows, every flower blooms, by the power of God.

The physical organism of man is under the supervision of God; but it is not like a clock, which is set in operation, and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath, but the entire being is under the supervision of God. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." In God we live and move and have our being. Each heart-beat, each breath, is the inspiration of him who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life,—the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM.

The ancient philosophers prided themselves on their superior knowledge. Let us read the inspired apostle's understanding of the matter. "Professing themselves to be wise," he says, "they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator." In its human wisdom the world can not know God. Its wise men gather an imperfect knowledge of God from his created works, and then in their foolishness they exalt nature and the laws of nature above nature's God. Those who have not a knowledge of God through an acceptance of the revelation he has made of himself in Christ, will obtain only an imperfect knowledge of him in nature; and this knowledge, so far from giving elevated conceptions of God, and bringing the whole being into conformity to his will, will make men idolaters. Professing themselves to be wise, they will become fools.

Those who think they can obtain a knowledge of God aside from his Representative, whom the Word declares is "the express image of his person," will need to become fools in their own estimation before they can be wise. It is impossible to gain a perfect knowledge of God from nature alone; for nature itself is imperfect. In its imperfection it can not

represent God, it can not reveal the character of God in its moral perfection. But Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. As a personal Saviour, he ascended on high; and he will come again as he ascended to heaven,—a personal Saviour. He is the express image of the Father's person. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Manuscript 23, 1898

The Character of God Revealed in Christ

“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of my people Israel.” [Luke 2:25-32.]

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. ... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” [Verses 40, 52.]

“I am come.” [John 10:10.] These were important words indeed. The work Christ came to do was to heal. He was a missionary in every sense of the word. In His parable of the good Shepherd, He showed the relation in which He stands to the human family:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” [Verses 1-5.]

The priests and rulers who were expositors of the Old Testament Scriptures understood the words of Christ. The figure used had a significance to all the people. Sheep were often used as a symbol of the people of God. Through Ezekiel God had said, “For thus saith the Lord God; behold, I even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered: so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries,

and bring them to their own land, and feed them by the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold: and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

“I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord God; behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.” [Ezekiel 34:11-19.]

And the prophet Zechariah says, “And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them, And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter in the house of the Lord. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

“And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd: for, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.” [Zechariah 11:10-17.]

Those who should have acted as shepherd of the people, those who should have been a blessing to the needy and helpless and those who needed comfort and sympathy and tender regard, did not give them that which they so much needed. The Jewish rulers had not the fear and love of God. Many of them had no true commission for their work. The universe of heaven saw how strangely neglected was the work, and the seal of heaven was not placed upon it. The priests and rulers assumed

to be ministers, but they did not minister to the ones who needed their assistance.

Said Christ, "He that entereth not in by the door of the sheep fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." [John 10:1.] "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me, if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: but I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

"The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep: and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall bear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." [Verses 7-18.]

Jesus always disclaimed independence. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. "I came down from heaven," He said, "not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." [John 6:38.] "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works. Believe me that that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake." [John 14:10, 11.]

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

"Thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread the earth and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people, and spirit to them that walk

therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people: for a light to the Gentiles; to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house: I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” [Isaiah 42:1-8.]

This is the work of Christ in our world. God manifest in the flesh specifies His mission, and He waited and worked and moved in dependence upon God. He was Commander of all heaven, yet He humbled Himself to stand at the head of humanity, to reveal in humanity a perfect obedience to all God’s commandments.

“Think not” He said “that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven”—called the least by the heavenly angels. Whatever his learning, his wealth, his position, the record of heaven estimates him as the least of all God’s creatures. “But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” [Matthew 5:17-19.] This will be the decision made in the heavenly courts. The humble and obedient are estimated as higher than the most exalted, the most wealthy, the most honored, of men on earth.

Christ waited and lived and moved in dependence upon God. In His actions He was one with the Father. His plans were devised before the foundation of the world in council with the Father. In everything He moved in perfect harmony with God. In response to the words of Philip, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” [John 14:8-10.]

The evangelist John withdraws the curtain aside, as it were, and as a consecrated priest enters into the holy of holies, opening to us the sacred character of Jesus Christ. He gives the record of Christ’s last moments among His disciples before His humiliation and His passion. Words flowed from His divine lips full of intense love and of weighty importance. The lofty words of inspiration were to be their hold during their test and trial, as an anchor holds a vessel.

Some points Christ repeated. He was giving His last communications to His loved ones, whose words would be repeated to the whole

world. He would have them understand His relation to His Father, and to His church on the earth. The fervor of His divine soul would carry the disciples with Him if possible; but he knew that the light He was them giving them was beyond their present comprehension. They had not attained to that place where they could take in these elevated themes. But they had the promise that the Holy Spirit would bring all His words to their minds, and then they would better comprehend them.

The fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John are rich in promises, and are calculated to be of inestimable value to the disciples in their future work. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, who is so plainly revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, believe [also] in me as the brightness of his glory, the manifestation of his character. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I would not deceive you, I go to prepare a place for you, to secure for you the right to a home in my Father's kingdom. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. I left the royal courts of heaven to come to you, to show you the way. And if I have come to the earth for your sake, I will be with you in the mansions I have prepared. Let not sorrow fill your hearts, because I love you; and whither I go ye know and the way ye know." [See John 14:1-4.]

"Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." [Verses 5-7.] He is the express image of His Father's person. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power." [Colossians 2:9, 10.]

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The Divine Character Exemplified in Christ

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The Son of God clothed divinity with humanity. Isaiah describes him, saying: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." God in human nature is the mystery of godliness. Christ, the only begotten of the Father, was the express image of his Father's person, the brightness of his glory, and he came to the world not to condemn the world but to save it. God was in Christ in human form, and endured all the temptations wherewith man was beset; he participated in the suffering and trials of sorrowful human nature in our behalf. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." In his human nature he was "tempted in all points like as we are," he "suffered being tempted," but there was no taint of sin upon him.

The condescension on the part of the Son of God was included in the plan of God for the unfolding of divine wisdom to fallen men. Divinity united with humanity could alone reach humanity, and impart spiritual life to those who were "dead in trespasses and sins." In order to work the restoration of the fallen, it was necessary that man's will should come into harmony with the divine will. God purposed that men should conform to the divine Model. The glory of the wisdom of God continually shines forth to humanity in the Son of God. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Every step that Christ advanced from the manger to Calvary established his character as the One who could say without

any qualification, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." What exalted ideas of the law of God do we obtain as we behold Jesus fulfilling every precept, and representing the character of God before the world! It was by fulfilling the law that Christ made known the Father to the world.

The plan of redemption is perfect in all its parts. It does not demerit or lessen the claims of the law of God in one jot or one tittle in saving the sinner from the just penalty of the law. Through the provision of the death of God's only-begotten Son in sinners' behalf, the immutability of the law of God is demonstrated for time and eternity. Justice honors the law of God in providing a substitute for the transgressor; for Christ gave his own life a ransom in order that God might be just and yet be the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. The work of saving the lost through the merit of Christ magnifies the law and harmonizes with every perfection of Jehovah. In the plan of salvation the highest honor is paid to the law of heaven's government, and yet mercy is freely dispensed to the fallen sons of Adam. Every believing soul, cooperating with the great Restorer, is blessed with heavenly grace, and endowed with the richest treasures of the glory of God. The imagination cannot picture anything more glorious than that which is attained through the plan of redemption. Well may we exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

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