

February 13, 1893 The Plan of Salvation. By Mrs. E. G. White. {An article appearing in The Signs of the Times}

The law of love is the foundation of God's government, and the service of love the only service acceptable to heaven. God has granted freedom of will to all, endowed men with capacity to appreciate his character, and therefore with ability to love him and to choose his service. **So long as created beings worshiped God they were in harmony throughout the universe.** While love to God was supreme, love to others abounded. **As there was no transgression of the law,** which is the transcript of God's character, **no note of discord jarred the celestial harmonies.** {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 1}

But known unto God are all his works, and **from eternal ages the covenant of grace (unmerited favor) existed in the mind of God. It is called the everlasting covenant;** for the plan of salvation was not conceived after the fall of man, but it was that which was "kept in **silence through times eternal,** but now is manifested and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 2} {see *Romans 16:25-26*}

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created and endowed with power to do the divine will. **The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was** not an after thought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but **an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing, not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created.** {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 3}

Before Him who ruleth in the heavens, the mysteries of the past and future are alike outspread, and God sees beyond the woe and darkness and ruin that sin has wrought, the outworking of his purpose of love and blessing. Though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet **righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne.** {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 4}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of his love in giving "his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our Heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 5} {See *John 3:16*}

When man sinned, all heaven was filled with sorrow; for through yielding to temptation, man became the enemy of God, a partaker of the Satanic nature. The image of God in which he had been created was marred and distorted. The character of man was out of harmony with the character of God; for **through sin man became carnal, and the carnal heart is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.** To the angels there seemed to be no way of escape for the transgressor. They ceased their songs of praise, and **throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin sin had wrought.** Out of harmony with the nature of God, unyielding to the claims of his law, naught but destruction was before the human race. Since **the divine law is as changeless as the character of God,** there could be no hope for man unless some way could be devised whereby his transgression might be pardoned, his nature renewed, and his spirit restored to reflect the image of God. **Divine love had conceived such a plan.** It was through Satan's misrepresentation of God's character that man was led to doubt the reality of his love, and came to look upon God as his enemy. As Satan had done in heaven, so he did on earth,--declared God's government unjust, the restrictions of his law unnecessary, and bade man, as he had angels, to throw aside the yoke and let the dictates of their own nature be their only guide and law. He promised liberty; but as he himself is the servant of corruption, he brought the race into bondage, to sin, misery, and death. He represented God as claiming all and giving nothing, as requiring men's service for his own glory, but denying himself nothing for man's good. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 6} {See *Romans 8:7*}

In the work of creation, Christ was with God. He was one with God, equal with him, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the representative of the Father. He alone, the Creator of man, could be his Saviour. No angel of heaven could reveal the Father to the sinner, and win him back to allegiance to God. But Christ could manifest the Father's love; for **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.** Christ could be the "day's man" between a holy God and lost humanity, one who could "lay his hand upon us both." **None but Christ could redeem man from the curse of the law.** He proposed to take upon himself the guilt and shame of sin,--sin so offensive in the sight of God that it would necessitate separation from his Father. Christ proposed to reach to the depths of man's degradation and woe, and restore the repenting, believing soul to harmony with God. **Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, offered himself as a sacrifice and substitute for the fallen sons of Adam though in this offering all heaven was involved in infinite sacrifice.** But the Father so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that through his smitten heart a channel might be found for the outflowing of infinite love for fallen man. **Man had become so degraded by sin, his nature so perverted by evil, that it was impossible for him of himself to come into harmony with God,** whose nature is purity and love. But Christ redeemed him from the condemnation of the law, and imparted divine power, and through man's cooperation, the sinner could be restored to his lost estate. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 7} {See 2 *Corinthians 5:17-19; Revelation 13:8*}

The grace of Christ alone could change the heart of stone to a heart of flesh, make it alive unto God, and transform the character, so that a degraded child of sin might become a child of God and heir of heaven. Man had no power to justify the soul, to sanctify the heart. Moral disease could be healed only through the power of the great Physician. **The highest gift of heaven, even the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, was able to redeem the lost.** {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 8}

The only hope for the fallen race was found in becoming **reconciled to God**. Satan had so misrepresented God that man had no true conception of the divine character. Christ came to the world, and in carrying out the plan of salvation, revealed the fact that "**God is love.**" {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 9} {See 1 John 4:8}

When the plan of salvation was revealed to the angels, joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. The glory and the blessedness of a world redeemed outmeasured even the anguish of the Prince of Life. Through the celestial courts echoed the first strain of that song that angels sang above the hills of Bethlehem,—"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." And **the lost pair in the garden of Eden, standing as criminals before the righteous Judge**, waiting the sentence their transgression merited, **heard the first notes of the divine promise.** Before the life of toil and sorrow which sin had brought upon them was depicted before them, before the decree that the wages of sin is death was pronounced, they heard the promise of redemption. Though they must suffer from the power of their mighty foe, still through the merits of Christ they could look forward to victory. **The mystery of the gospel was spoken in Eden, when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."** If Satan could have touched the head with his specious temptations, the human family would have been lost; but the Lord had made known the purpose and plan of the mystery of grace, declaring that Christ had bruised the serpent under his feet. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 10} {See Luke 2:14; Genesis 3:15}

But not only had man come under the power of the deceiver, but **the earth itself, the dominion of man, was usurped by the enemy.** Through the plan of salvation, the sacrifice of Christ, not only was man but **his dominion to be redeemed.** **Through the merits of Christ all that man lost through sin was to be restored.** The time would come when there would be "no more curse, but the throne of God should be in it, and his servants should serve him." The promise would be fulfilled, "**The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever.**" {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 11} {See Revelation 22:3; Psalm 37:29}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the **salvation of man and the redemption of the earth.** Through **the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated.** Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last one glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. (To be continued.) {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12} {See Revelation 5:13}

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To fallen man was revealed the plan of infinite sacrifice through which salvation was to be provided. Nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate man's sin, and **Adam marveled at the goodness of God in providing such a ransom for the sinner.** Through the love of God, a star of hope illumined the terrible future that spreads before the transgressor. **Through the institution of the typical system of sacrifice and offering, the death of Christ was ever to be kept before guilty man, that he might better comprehend the nature of sin, the results of transgression, and the merit of the divine offering.** Had there been no sin, man would never have known death. **But in the innocent offering slain by his own hand, he beheld the fruits of sin,—the death of the Son of God in his behalf.** He sees the immutable character of the law he has transgressed, and confesses his sin; he relies upon the merits of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 1}

The plan of saving sinners through Christ alone was the same in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and in every successive generation that lived before the advent of Christ, as it is in our day. The patriarchs, the prophets, the martyrs from righteous Abel, looked forward to a coming Saviour, and they showed their faith in him by sacrifices and offerings. **The sacrifice of beasts shadowed forth the sinless offering of God's dear Son, and pointed forward to his death upon the cross. But at the crucifixion type met antitype, and the typical system there ceased.** {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 2}

The Son of God is the center of the great plan of redemption which covers all dispensations. He is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He is the Redeemer of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam in all ages of human probation. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Christ is the substance or body which casts its shadow back into former dispensations. When Christ died, the shadow ceased. **At the death of Christ the typical system was done away, but the law of God, whose violation had made the plan of salvation necessary, was magnified and made honorable.** The gospel was good tidings of great joy to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses; for it presented to them a coming Saviour. A more clear and glorious light now shines upon the Christian. Those who lived before the coming of Christ looked forward by faith to his coming, but what had to be grasped by faith by them is assurance to us; for we know that Christ has come, as foretold by the prophets. It is just as **essential for us to have faith in our Redeemer, who came to earth and died our sacrifice, as it was for the ancients to believe in a Redeemer to come, represented by their offerings and sacrifices.** {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 3} {See 1 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8}

In becoming **man's substitute**, in bearing the curse which should fall upon man, **Christ has pledged himself in behalf of the race to maintain the sacred and exalted honor of his Father's law.** He came to convince men of sin, which is the transgression of the law, and through divine mediation bring them **back to obedience to God's commandments.** God has given the world into the hands of Christ, that he may completely vindicate the binding claims of the law, and make manifest the holiness of every principle. Christ was the Father's "appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." He was the "brightness of his glory, the express image of his person." And he upheld "all things by the word of his power." He possessed divine excellency and greatness. It pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell. And Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Yet **Jesus exchanged a throne of light and glory which he had with his Father, counting it not a thing to be desired to be equal with God, while man was lost in sin and misery.** He came from heaven to earth, **clothed his divinity with humanity**, and bore the curse as surety for the fallen race. He was not compelled to do this; but he chose to bear the results of man's transgression that **man might escape eternal death.** {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 4} {See *Hebrews 1:2; Philippians 2:6-11*}

The coming of Christ to our world was a great event, not only to this world, but to all the worlds in the universe of God. Before the heavenly intelligences he was to **take upon himself our nature**, to be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet to leave an example of perfect purity and unblemished character. {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 5}

Satan and his angels exulted as they discovered that the Son of God had taken upon himself the nature of man, and had come to be man's substitute, to engage in the conflict in our behalf. The human family had been overpowered by the deception of the enemy; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and the enemy hoped that Christ also would become a victim to his seductive wiles. Satan gloried in the opportunity of besieging the Son of God with fierce temptations. Because he had taken upon himself the nature of man, Satan deemed that his victory was certain, and with every malignant device in his power he strove to overcome Christ. The steadfast resistance of Christ to the temptations of the enemy brought the whole confederacy of evil to war against him. Evil men and evil angels united their forces against the Prince of Peace. **The issues at stake were beyond the comprehension of men, and the temptations that assailed Christ were as much more intense and subtle than those which assail man as his character was purer and more exalted than is the character of man in his moral and physical defilement.** In his conflict with the prince of darkness in this atom of a world, Christ had to meet the whole confederacy of evil, the united forces of the adversary of God and man; but at every point he met the tempter, and put him to flight. Christ was conqueror over the powers of darkness, and took the infinite risk of consenting to war with the enemy, that he might conquer him in our behalf. {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 6}

The Redeemer of the world clothed his divinity with humanity, that he might reach humanity; for, **in order to bring to the world salvation, it was necessary that humanity and divinity should be united. Divinity needed humanity, that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man, and humanity needed divinity, that a power from above might restore man to the likeness of God.** Christ was God, but he did not appear as God. He veiled the tokens of divinity, which had commanded the homage of angels and called forth the adoration of the universe of God. He made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was **made in the likeness of sinful flesh.** For our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 7}

He humbled himself to pass through man's experiences, and he would not turn aside from the plan by which salvation could come to man. Knowing all the steps in the path of his humiliation, he refused not to descend step by step to the depths of man's woe, that he might make expiation for the sins of the condemned, perishing world. **What humility was this! It amazed the angels. Tongue can never describe it. Pen can never portray it. The imagination cannot take it in.** Sinless and exalted by nature, the Son of God consented to take the habiliments of humanity, to become one with the fallen race. **The eternal Word consented to be made flesh.** God became man. {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 8}

But he stepped still lower; he humbled himself to bear insult, reproach, accusation, and shameful abuse. **In the world which HE had made**, which was sustained by the word of his power, there seemed to be no room for him. He had to flee from one place to another until his life work was accomplished. He was betrayed by one of his followers, and denied by another. He was mocked and taunted. He was crowned with thorns, and forced to bear the burden of the cross. He was not insensible to ignominy and contempt; he submitted to it, but he felt its bitterness as no other being could feel it. Pure, holy, and undefiled, he was yet arraigned as criminal before the eyes of the world. From the highest exaltation the adorable Redeemer took step after step in the path of humiliation. He consented to die in the sinner's stead, that by a life of obedience man might escape the penalty of the law. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death. And what a death! It was the most shameful, the most cruel--the death upon the cross as a malefactor. He died not as a hero in the eyes of men, loaded with honors; he died as a condemned criminal, suspended between the heavens and the earth--**died a lingering death, exposed to the tauntings and revilings of a debased and profligate mob.** "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head." He was numbered with the transgressors, and even his kinsmen according to the flesh disowned him. He was forced to see the sword pierce the heart of his mother,--he beheld her sorrow. He expired amidst derision. But all his sufferings were counted as of small account in consideration of the result he was working out in behalf of man, and for the good of the whole universe. **He expired on the cross exclaiming, "It is finished," and that cry rang through every world, and through heaven itself. The great contest between Christ, the Prince of Life, and Satan, the prince of darkness, was practically over, and Christ was Conqueror.** His death answered the question as to whether there was self-denial with the **Father and the Son.** (Concluded next number.) {ST, February 20, 1893 par. 9} {See *Psalms 22:7; John 19:30*}

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Through the death of Christ a door of hope was opened for fallen man. Man was under sentence of death for the transgression of the law of God. He was under condemnation as a traitor, as a rebel; but Christ came to be his substitute, to die as a malefactor, to suffer the penalty of the traitors, bearing the weight of their sins upon his divine soul. He descended lower and lower till there was no lower depths of humiliation to sound in order that he might lift up those who would believe in him, and cleanse the guilty from moral defilement, and impart to them his own righteousness. **He died to make an atonement, to redeem, cleanse, restore, and exalt man to a place at his right hand.** {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 1}

Through his life upon earth he scattered blessings wherever he went. Though at his word legions of angels would render him homage, yet he walked the earth unhonored, unconfessed. In place of praise he met reproach. He walked among men as one of the poor and lowly. Though he healed the sick, relieved the oppressed, bound up the broken hearted, yet few called him blessed, and the great of the earth passed him by with disdain. {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 2}

As a member of the human family he was mortal, but as God he was a fountain of life to the world. He could have withstood the advances of death and refused to come under its dominion, but voluntarily he laid down his life that he might bring life and immortality to light. He bore the sin of the world, endured the penalty, yielded up his life as a sacrifice, that man should not eternally die. Contrast his suffering and humiliation with the riches of his glory, with the wealth of praise pouring forth from immortal tongues, with the anthems of adoration, with the homage of millions of holy angels in the heights of the sanctuary, and seek to comprehend what manner of love inspired the heart of Jesus. {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 3}

How much has God loved the race of men?—Look to Calvary. As you behold Jesus upon the cross, does not the heinous character of sin appear? **It was sin that caused the death of God's dear Son, and sin is the transgression of the law.** Says the prophet: "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. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." **When the sinner realizes that Christ died for him, that he might impute his righteousness unto him, he magnifies the love of God in providing the plan of salvation.** {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 4} {See *Isaiah 53:4-11*}

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." At infinite cost the salvation of man has been purchased. The world may refuse the gift, but this will not lessen its value, or relieve men of its responsibility. When he was upon earth Jesus said to those who refused him, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." There are many who are refusing to respond to the drawing love of Christ today. Jesus calls, but many refuse to respond to the invitation. They will not avail themselves of **the privilege of having Jesus for their personal Saviour.** They do not come **in humility and faith, that they may know by a personal experience what they are to Jesus, and what he is to them.** But the promise is, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Jesus will not rest until he leads his followers unto the realms of perfect joy and glory. {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 5} {See *Romans 6:22-23; John 5:40; Isaiah 53:11*}

The plans of God cannot fail. Men make great plans, but fail to accomplish the object that they design. They begin to build and are not able to finish. They do not count the cost. But **Jesus counted the cost of the salvation of every son and daughter of Adam. He provided abundant means whereby all might be saved, if they would but comply with the conditions and lay hold upon eternal life.** Unfailing resources are at his command to complete the work which he has begun. Those who respond to his love, yielding their wills to him, will not perish, but have everlasting life. {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 6}

How the wondrous provision of the plan of God for the salvation of men widens and exalts our ideas of the love of God! How **it binds our hearts to the great Heart of infinite love!** How it makes us delight in his service, as our hearts respond to the drawing of his loving-kindness and loving mercy! John calls upon men to behold the marvelous love of God. He exclaims: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." **Those who are true, who are pure, who love and obey the words of God, will be counted children of the Heavenly King, members of the royal family, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ.** {ST, February 27, 1893 par. 7} {See *1 John 3:1-3*}