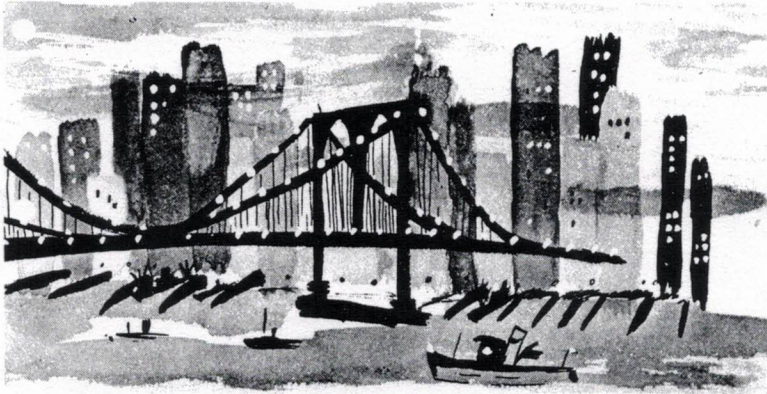


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"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

WHAT IS MAN?

The Psalmist declared when he considered the heavens, and the works of God found therein - the moon and the stars - he was motivated to ask the question - "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visiteth him?"¹ Indeed, what is involved in the destiny of man that calls forth such attention and interest from the eternal world. When one adds the dimension of the Cross to the picture, he is truly constrained to ask - "What is man?"

In the beginning, though formed from the dust of the ground, man bore the image of his Maker.² More basic than mere outward resemblance to the Creator, was the power bestowed - "power to think and to do."³ The destiny that lay before man - had he exercised this power wisely - is beyond human imagination. "A new and distinct order" "capable of partaking of the divine nature", man was "designed to be a counterpart of God."⁴ He would have remained only "a little while inferior to the angels."⁵

A decision to distrust God's goodness, disbelieve His word, and reject His authority altered the whole picture for man.⁶ Man surrendered to a servitude of one who in heaven had questioned the same authority. This surrender - this misuse of his God-given power to think and to do - brought a change in man's nature. "The result of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force, which ~~is~~ unaided, he cannot resist."⁷ Instead of being able to stand in the independence of his God-given individuality, he became a slave, a serf in the most cruel servi-

tude, the bondage of sin. If this state had continued without interference, "man would have formed a firm alliance with Satan against heaven."⁸

The Creator, exercising His sovereign right, intervened. He knew that man as he had been created could have withstood in his own strength the artful suggestions and temptations of Satan and conquered. He also knew that man separated from the light and power of God through sin could not in his own strength resist the temptations of Satan.⁹ In the beginning enmity had had no natural existence in the heart of man, but God introduced a new principle into the controversy to help break the hold of Satan over the hearts of men. "In the statement, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed,' God pledged Himself to introduce into the hearts of human beings a new principle, - a hatred of sin, of deception, of pretense, of everything that bears the mark of Satan's guile."⁸

Furthermore, a plan was unfolded - a compact that had been made between the Father and the Son - known as the plan of salvation. What was this to do for and to man? "The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan."¹⁰ Man is again to be able to stand in his God-given individuality, exercising on his own behalf, the power to think and to do. His free moral agency is to be preserved and fully restored. That this might be realized all the resources of heaven are made available - freely and abundantly.

"The fall did not create in man new faculties, energies, and passions; for this would have been a reflection upon God." The powers given to man in creation were perverted; the affections were misplaced, and turned from the high and holy purpose to a lower aim and to meet a lower standard. But when man chooses to return to God -----

the inclinations, the taste, the appetite, and the passions are brought into higher, holier channels. The bias to evil is over-

come through man's determined effort, aided by the grace of Christ. The faculties that have been warped in a wrong direction are no longer misused, perverted, and misapplied. . . The truth has been accepted, has converted the soul, transformed the character, and there is a purification and elevation of all the powers of the being, and the God-given powers are no longer debased.¹¹

The mediatorial ministry of Christ - His earthly life, death, and intercession - makes this possible for man. "Christ is the 'Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart."⁷ By accepting Christ as a personal Saviour from sin, man finds freedom from guilt, and receives power to resist that force in his nature perverted through sin, and "to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy."⁷ Through the abundance of the grace bestowed, man is to "shew forth the virtues of Him who hath called [him] out of darkness into His marvelous light."¹²

The restoration of man to his original state is not all that is involved in the plan of redemption. Andreasen has well stated that "the matter of greatest importance in the universe is *not* the salvation of man, important as that may seem. The most important thing is the clearing of God's name from the false accusations made by Satan."¹³ The servant of the Lord has written:

The plan of redemption has yet a broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but *it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.*¹⁴

The suggestion on the part of Satan that the law of God could not be kept was a reflection on the character of God, for the Law is but a transcript of His character. The charge suggested that the character of God is not something worthy of emulation; but rather than God being a God of love, He is really a selfish

despot.¹⁵ This insinuation of selfishness lured our first parents to make the fatal choice that plunged the world into sin.¹⁶

Christ committed Himself to the controversy to unmask the deceiver. He came as a man, to see through the eyes of a man, whether under the circumstances He would meet as a man, He would under all conditions choose God's viewpoint. As a God, there would have been no question as to His choices each step of the way. But He took mortality upon Himself, and as a free moral agent revealed not "what a God could do, but what a man could do, through faith in God's power to help in every emergency."¹⁷

Not only did Christ - garbed in fallen human nature - vindicate the character of God in every particular, He also provided the means of atonement so that God can be just, and yet justify the repentant sinner. More than this, Christ covenanted "to complete His work, and fulfil His pledge to 'make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.'"¹⁸ This reference in the inspired testimonies is taken from Isaiah 13:12. The context of this verse is most revealing. The tenth verse sets the time element as beginning when the great marker signs would take place telling that the hour of God's investigative judgment was about to begin. The thirteenth verse indicates the period under prophetic observation would close "in the day of the Lord's wrath, and in the day of His fierce anger." The verses in prophecy telling us when Christ would complete His covenant work coincide in time with His High Priestly ministry of the final atonement in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary.

What is man? What privileges are man's in this final hour of human history? Indeed, we are made "a theatre unto the world, and to angels, and to men."¹⁹ It will be demonstrated that through the abundant "help provided, man, in his fallen nature, can do the very things God expects him to do."²⁰ Then will God be vindicated, and His character cleared. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity,

nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth."²¹ Then from the Throne will come the valedictory - "Here are they that keep the commandments of God", and did not betray the faith that Christ placed in them.²²

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife *had made herself ready*. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*²³

¹Psalm 8:3-4

²Genesis 1:27; 2:7

³Ellen G. White, Education, p. 17

⁴Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, Feb. 11, 1902, April 21, 1885, June 18, 1895.

⁵Hebrews 2:7 margin.

⁶Ellen G. White, Education, p. 25

⁷Ibid., p. 29

⁸Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, p. 6

⁹Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, August 18, 1874

¹⁰Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 311

¹¹Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, March 1, 1887

¹²I Peter 2:10 margin

¹³M. L. Andreasen, The Sanctuary Service, p. 320

¹⁴Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 68

¹⁵Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 24

¹⁶Genesis 3:5

¹⁷Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, Sept. 4, 1900; Ms. 29, 1899; Signs of the Times, April 24, 1893

¹⁸Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 790

¹⁹I Cor. 4:9 margin

²⁰Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, April 15, 1909

²¹Zephaniah 3:13

²²Revelation 14:12

²³Revelation 19:6-8

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