

**TALKING
ABOUT
GOD**

Roy Loney

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"TALK TO ME ABOUT GOD"

As I entered the bus to go to an appointment, I noticed there were only a few passengers. I took a seat directly opposite a rather young man who seemed unusually friendly. I stowed my luggage; then he, with a friendly gesture, offered me a paper to read, which I accepted with thanks. Afterwhile I handed it back. For a moment he held me with his eyes and reached under his coat, pulled out a bottle and offered me a drink. I shook my head in refusal and offered him a New Testament. He did not seem much abashed and kept talking. I then told him I was entirely deaf and that he could talk to me only with pencil and paper. I thought that would squelch him as few strangers would care to talk to me by writing. To tell the truth I did not care to talk with him as I felt he was just drunk enough to be talkative. But he insisted that I move over to his seat so we could talk. He stated that he was an FBI man and was a Catholic, stating that he almost had to be a Catholic in order to hold that particular job. I thought his statement rather strange as I knew that Mr. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI, was a devout Presbyterian. The young man asked me of the belief and practices of the church of Christ, and so I began, as most any church of Christ preacher would, telling him that we took the New Testament as our only rule of faith and practice—that we emphasized that we must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. I was going along in good feather when he seemed to be losing interest, looking out the window rather than listening to me. I stopped speaking for a moment, when he turned back to me and wrote rather vigorously, "Talk to

me about God." His request was so unusual that momentarily I was rather stumped.

Just then the bus struck a rough place in the road and we rather bounced together. I said, "this bus is going rather fast," to which he agreed; but I added that the bus could not move unless there was a motive power to propel it. Then I stated that the world was moving many times faster than the bus, and it had no diesel engine to move it. He was becoming quite interested; but I noticed that we were entering the town where I was to leave the bus and so I excused myself and started to get my luggage. He took my arm, pulling me back into the seat and handed me a dollar bill, stating that it was worth that to hear me talk about God's great power in the universe. That was the first time I ever got a dollar for speaking to a passenger on a bus.

The young man's request was so startling and unexpected that it sure set me to thinking. He was not interested in an intellectual discussion about doctrine. He went straight to the basis principle of religion. *He wanted to know about God!*

What will it avail us to have at our fingertips the doctrinal teachings on baptism, church government and the Lord's Supper if the knowledge, the love and divine purposes of God are not *first* implanted in our hearts? Jesus was once asked what was the greatest commandment and instantly he replied that the commandment was to love the Lord with all our hearts came first; but how can we love God unless we know God, what he is and what is his concern for such creatures as ourselves. Knowledge of God is absolutely essential to loving him, and loving him is the motive for our obedience to his laws. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me."

David admonished Solomon, "Know thou the God of thy fathers and serve him with a perfect heart." Perfect service can come only when he has a proper knowledge of God of heaven, and the first lesson of this booklet will be a reprint of a lesson delivered by Bro. Richard Riggings several years ago in Denver, Colorado, which was taped and then printed in his booklet, "Preach the Word." I hope that you will enjoy this

lesson as much as I have and be profited thereby. May the dear Lord bless you in your studies of God and his great power and love.

WHAT IS GOD?

by Richard Riggings

In this lesson I wish to speak of the very keystone of the Christian faith: the very center of the universe and that which created and upholds all things: of whom the apostle Paul said, that he is the "Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

When we talk about God we speak about the one with whom we start in search for the salvation of our souls because God is the object of our worship—He is the object of our service. God is and must be the goal of the universe, for according to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:10, God willed "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." It was the will of God that all things should be gathered together in Christ, and hence in himself. *God is the goal of the universe.*

It is our concept of our attitude toward God which determines the kind of life we will live. If we have the proper attitude toward God we will have the right attitude toward his church; we will have the right attitude toward his commandments because we have the right attitude toward God himself.

We must know God to appreciate him. It is only when we know him for what he is that we can serve him acceptably. It is because men don't truly know God that they don't serve him. Because men do not know God, they dispute his authority; they dare to alter his words: They change his law, and change it to suit themselves. In Psalms 36:1 this statement is made: "The transgression of the wicked saith

within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." This is the key which explains to us that it is only when men do not know God, and so do not fear him, that they dare to change his laws and walk in their own ways.

But I believe that if we really know God, if we understand just what God is, if we see him in his truth, in his perfection, in his majesty, power, and glory, we cannot help but serve God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"—Psalms 111:10.

In our discussion of God we wish to consider first: *Man cannot find God by his own wisdom*, neither can he discover him from the investigations of his own mind. There is nothing in the physical universe which can lead man to a true knowledge of God, although Paul stated "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse"—Rom. 1:19. However, this knowledge is limited. A man could know there was a God, and that he is a God of power from the evidence of the universe, but man could never understand God's personality, purpose, and will. While man has no excuse for not knowing of God, he could never know the magnitude of his power, and the greatness of his glory and love unless God had revealed himself to man. Man cannot see God and, hence, can know him only as he would reveal himself through the prophets and through his Son.

To prove this to be true, consider I Cor. 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." This proves that man could not know God of and by himself. We remember the words of God as recorded by the prophet Isaiah (55:8, 9) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Since man cannot comprehend the mind of God,

and since the ways and thoughts of God are so much higher than man's, it would be impossible for man to find God or to understand his nature without God revealing himself to man.

We must realize that it is impossible for us to know anything about God except as we find God revealed in his word. If we wish to know God we must turn to the Bible, for the Bible is God's revelation to man. It reveals God and shows us how God deals with mankind. It is God's revelation to us in order that we might know God, and knowing him might follow him and obey his commandments.

The next thing that we wish to consider is that *God is God: he is not a man*: that is, his nature is different, his being is different: he is not a creature: he is the Creator. Turn to Numbers 23:19 where Balaam the son of Bosor was speaking concerning God, "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said and shall he not do it; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Now the statement is, *God is not a man*. We turn to John 4:24 where the Saviour himself said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." So then God is not a man. He is not like man, he is not of our nature, he is not a creature but is, instead, the Creator.

Let us REMEMBER THAT WE CANNOT JUDGE God by our own feelings, by our own emotions, by our own reactions, because God is not a man. Just because we think something is true religiously does not prove anything. Why? Because God is not a man. That something pleases us might prove that it is pleasing to other men also: but it would not prove that God likes it. How do we know it is true? "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"—I John 2:15, 16. And yet though the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life appeals to all men; they do not please God. What does that prove? It proves this: that just because something pleases men it does not prove in any way that it pleases God. We cannot judge God according to human evaluation: If we try it we will fail;

fail without question. It will be a complete failure if we try to determine God's will by our own likes, dislikes, or by our own wisdom.

Now the third point we want to examine concerning God, is that even though he is a spirit, he is not some misty, intangible being, something or other floating around in the air having no substance at all. Just because God is a spirit does not mean that God is not a solid substance. God is a being who can be seen when the time comes. There is nothing in the Bible that carries the implication that God is like a vapor; an intangible, floating mist, without substance. We are told that God has a body. What does God look like? In Genesis 1:26, 27 the statement is made, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." If God meant what he said, we believe that in some ways God must resemble man, or more perfectly, that man in some way resembles God in shape or form. We know this because we are told in I Cor. 11:7, that man is the image and glory of God, while the woman is the glory of man; she bears the image of man. Now what does that prove? There is a physical difference between man and woman, but not a spiritual one. Then if there is a difference between them it must be in physical appearance, God must in some way resemble mankind.

The next point is this: God has certain attributes. We will list the first four of them before we consider another four. The first attribute is that *God is eternal*. "Look unto me, and be ye saved all ye of the ends of the earth, for I am God and besides me there is none else." Isaiah 45:32. Thus we learn that God is the only eternal power: without God there is nothing. He is the Eternal.

Now turn to Psalms 90:1-4, The verses give us a picture of the eternality of God. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." When

we deal with God, we are dealing with one to whom time means nothing. The very idea of a thousand years in our life encompasses a great number of people. Generation after generation passes by; kingdoms arise and kingdoms disintegrate and fall, yet all of that time in God's sight is only as a yesterday when it is past. Yesterday wasn't very long. Today may seem long. Tomorrow may be long, if we live, but yesterday after it is passed wasn't very long at all; it is past; it is too late. If it is the last day of a man's life, how short yesterday is—but "a watch in the night." A very short time after it has passed we look back upon it as being almost no time at all.

Do you realize, friends, that if we look at all the time that the world and creation has existed, all of time itself, and cast it into the realm of eternity, it would not make a single drop in the sea of eternity! "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." God is eternal. He is without beginning and he is without end. You can never escape him. There was never a time when he did not exist, and there never will be a time when he will not be.

The second thing I want to consider has to do with *three characteristics of God*.

The first thing is, God is all-wise. The apostle Paul in I Timothy 1:17 states this as a fact: He is the only wise God. When we consider that all wisdom came from God, we realize that God knows everything. There is not one thing man can hide from God. Man can close his mind to some small sin back in the corner of his mind, and try to deceive God, but "Be not deceived; God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." In Hebrews 4:12 I want to show you the depth and the extent of the knowledge of God; God knows everything. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any

creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." *All things are known to God.* There is not one thought, there is not one emotion, there is not one intention that is hidden from the mind of God: God knows all things. From the very beginning to the end of time, nothing is hidden from the mind of God. We need to realize the wisdom of God, the knowledge of God. You and I forget things, but God forgets nothing. How many of you have forgotten to turn the stove off when you leave home? Sometimes you have forgotten to turn the water off when you watered the lawn. We forget a dozen and one things; but God has never forgotten even one single thing. Of all the people in the universe, everyone of them is known to God. God knows every single one of all the billions of people that have ever lived; He knows everything that they did, and everything they thought. God's mind and wisdom is so great that it expands into every life on the face of the earth. We know this to be true because in Matt. 10:29 Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." In other words, God knows when even a little sparrow dies. "Are not the very hairs of your head numbered?"

When we consider the fact that all life comes from God, we are able to understand that every single seed that sprouts on the face of the earth is known to God. God's mind and wisdom is so great that he is able to encompass the infinite details of the entire universe. There is nothing that God forgets, and yet we think that we can cover up our actions, that we can shut up our mind and that God does not know; but that we can hide it, we can shove it away and God will forget it. We do something wrong and don't correct it, then maybe ten, twenty, or thirty years later we are secure in our minds that nobody knows about it; that it is all forgotten, but we need to remember that God forgets nothing. *That deed, that sin, that action* is as fresh in the mind of God as the very day it was committed. God has not forgotten. In the

record that is before God, our entire life is there. Let us then remember that the all-wise God forgets nothing.

The second thing to consider is that God is everywhere. Did not the apostle Paul say to the proud Athenians, "In him we live and move and have our being"—Acts 17:28. Do you realize that God and the universe are almost co-extensive? That wherever you are, you are in the hand of God?

There was a man named Jonah who thought he could flee from the presence of God. When he was told to go to a certain place he boarded a ship and sailed out to Tarshish, which today is Spain, thinking he could get away from God. You remember what happened, don't you? God found him in the middle of the sea and sent a fish to collect him. Poor Jonah was in the belly of the whale in the depths of the sea; not a man in the world knew where Jonah was; no one could have found Jonah if the entire world had united together and sought him. They never would have found him; but God knew where he was, and when Jonah repented of his sin and prayed to God, the whale delivered Jonah to the exact spot where God wanted him to go in the first place. You can't get away from God.

Let us remember these two points then. First of all, God knows everything about you, and, you can't hide a thing from God no matter how you try. In Psalms 139:5-7 the statement is made in regard to man; that no matter where he fled, he would find God was there. We can't get away from God.

The last thing to be considered in this first series is the power of God. Now God might know everything, and that would not mean anything if he could do nothing about it. You know that if a person has no power to enforce his decisions you can laugh at them if you wish, and it doesn't make any difference. If there were no way to enforce the law, the town policeman could not do a thing. They might see a law broken, but if there were no penalties attached they could do nothing about it. If they don't have the power to punish the lawbreakers, the law itself is of no value. Now if God could do nothing to enforce his law, there wouldn't be

anything for man to be concerned about. You could disregard the law of God and live your own way.

We call your attention now to the book of Isaiah. We have a picture the prophet held out before the children of Israel; but it is a picture that we today need to have in our own minds and hearts if we are to know God as God is. This passage is in chapter 40: verses 9 to 15. "O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" Let us then look at God even as Judah was told to look at God. "Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him." *Consider the gentleness of God* toward those who serve and follow him. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young." Now *look at the power; look at the greatness of this one.* We must realize who *He* is, and that he is able to come down, to descend, to earth from the highest heaven, from the great place that is beyond the comprehension of mankind. Who is this one who reaches down into the world and takes the poor sinful, frail human being, and lifts him up, and carries him along like a shepherd? Who is this one who does so much for mankind? Who is the one who sent his Son to die that we might live? Who is the one that gave his revelation and his law that we might know his will? Who is this one? In answer let us notice the power and the greatness of God.

Now if we see this God clearly in our mind, if we can see him as Isaiah saw him then we will not stand against him, we will not dare refuse his commands. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand," as if God in his infinite greatness is able to extend his right hand and scoop all the waters of the world, all the seas and oceans into the hollow of his hand as a man reaches down and lifts a little bit of water out of a pool and holds it in his hand? Our God is so great that all the seas of the world would not fill the hollow

of His hand. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span." What a picture of the greatness of God! That this vast solar system, the universe, which the greatest telescopes that man has ever built have not been able to peer out to the extremities of that universe, into the ages, and into the vast realms of space that are so far beyond the comprehension of man that the mind of man reels before the astronomical figures, and the great power of that almost endless universe, while God can span the whole thing with the width of His hand! As if the Lord God could pick up the whole universe as a child would pick up a little rubber ball and bounce it in his hand. The Lord God is able to measure the heavens with the span!

We are talking about God who is so great that the universe itself is but a small thing to him. Who is this God before whom men dare to stand, while they oppose, and rebel against Him? Reject his law without fear, and refuse to worship him?

Now, let us examine another statement of the greatness of God's power. "Comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure." As if God could take all the dust together and hold it in a little measure as a man uses a sugar scoop, and scoops sugar or coffee out of a bin; even so God could take a measure and scoop all the dust of the earth and measure it.

Did you ever see a balancing scale that a man can hold in his hand? You put a little weight on one side, and the thing to be weighed on the other. This is the picture of the greatness of God: He could lift all the mountains of the world, place them on the scales, and hold and balance them in his hand. This is the God before whom we must stand!

Then in regard to the mind of God: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold he taketh up the isles

as a very little thing." If all of the opposition of mankind against God, and all the efforts of puny, frail humanity, and all of the united wisdom of the human race were united against the power and will of God, God would count their efforts as no more than we count a little dust that falls on the platform scale when we weigh some large object. Did you ever see someone take a cloth and brush a little dust off of a large scale? It does not amount to anything, does it? The influence on the actual weight of that which is being weighed is insignificant. In the same way, all that man has ever done against the will of God will, in the final judgment, count as nothing in delaying the will of God. It will have no influence against the law of God. Surely we can agree with the apostle Paul, "Yea, let God be true and his law will never be changed. God is a God of power to whom the feeble power of man is nothing. Our wisdom and understanding will melt away as the mists fade away before the morning sun. He is God, and beside him "there is none else"—this one who is holding the universe in existence—this one with such great power that he speaks and the universe springs into existence: this is he who has spoken to us through the gospel teaching us how to live. This is the one who in his infinite love has bent down and offered to mankind the salvation of his soul. Oh, "what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands." What are we that we deserve the mercy of God? Who are we that the great God of the universe should be concerned with us? In the sight of God we are smaller than a microbe that lies on the table, for God can hold the universe in his hand; yet he is able to peer down through the infinite miles of space, down to the little planet earth and locate every man and woman: he knows all about them, watches over them and cares for them. He that is our God! "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

Four Facets of God

The statement is often made in defining God, that "God is love." They state this as if it were a complete description of God. In the Bible there are three statements stating that *God is*; and one in which it is implied. When we try to describe or define God we will deal with all the things which apply to him, not just one concept which is many times stressed above all else. However, we will deal first with *God is Love!* "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! If God were not love, why would he bother with us? There is not a single man, woman, boy, or girl who has reached the age of responsibility but who has not "sinned and come short of the glory of God." They have failed God time and time again. How many times in our own lifetime have we failed to do the things God wanted us to do? When God counted on us, we weren't there. When God expected us to grow, we did not grow. When God expected our service, we did not serve him. When God expected our mind, our body, and our heart for his service, we used them for our own pleasure, not for the Lord's service. Why should God love man? Because God is love! God in his infinite goodness shows that part of his character toward man; that love God has extended to man; but remember, God's love has a limit. That limit is in Christ Jesus. In John 15:10, Jesus said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." If we believe in the love of God, we will abide within his commandments. Remember this: the love of God has a limit beyond which it cannot go. The love of God cannot save within the sinful world. Why? Because God and sin cannot live together; His love can only go so far. When God offered his Son for the sins of the world; when God sent his Son into the world; he sent him not to condemn the world, "but that the world through him *might be saved.*" This was the only possibility; it was the only way. As surely as he is God, God cannot go beyond that boundary which his will has set. How

do we know this? In Jude, this statement is made, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world."—Titus 2:12, 13.

What, then is the love of God? It was god's love which sent Christ into the world that men might be saved. The love of God was manifested in Christ and, I say this confidently, the love of God does not extend beyond Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6.

GOD IS LIGHT

Second: We must consider not only the love of God, for though God is love; God is also light. In I John 1:5 it is stated, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God is light. Now, what is light? Light, of course, is the opposite of darkness; it is purity and righteousness. God is holy. In I Peter 1:14, we find this: "Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy." Let us remember that God is light, and as surely as he is light we know that there can be no sin in us if God is to associate with us. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" I John 1:6. We know that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; therefore, if I live in darkness, I live in sin and I cannot have God in me and I cannot be in God. Why? Because God is light, and in God there is no darkness. If I had darkness in me and I were in God, that would prove that God has darkness in him; but the Bible declares that he has none in him.

Someone will say "But darkness does not refer to sin." Please turn to Ephesians 5:8 "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:" (Once they had been darkness but now they were "light in the Lord.") "Walk

as Children of light: have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." What is darkness? If darkness is not sin, then what is it? What did Paul mean in saying "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness?" Darkness has always been synonymous with sin; with the things that are evil and wrong. Again, turn to Colossians 1:13 where we find this statement: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:" Does God mean that we were translated from a condition which was not sin? Darkness is synonymous with evil. In God there is no evil for God is light; I am sure that is the idea expressed here--purity. God is absolute purity: in him there is no sin. This we know: a sinner cannot live with God; therefore if we live in sin, we are apart from God: From the very nature of God this must be true. As long as there is sin in your life, God is not there. Why? Because he is God, that is why. Because God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

GOD IS LIFE

The next point to consider is implied but not expressly stated. In I Timothy 6:15, 16 the statement is made: "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting." We find this: that there is life--that is eternal life, and that this life is in God. In John 5:8 Jesus pointed out that God had life and had given to the Son to have life in himself. Now turn to I John 5:11 "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." So, we know that God is life, and that God in Jesus has extended eternal life to mankind. Now, Ephesians 4:17--"That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given

themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." Now I want you to consider this statement, "being alienated from the life of God": God is life. All life comes from God, and so in a true sense, God is life. Without God there is no life, and separation between God and man means that man is cut off from the life of God and so is dead. God is life; there is no death in God, but separation from God is death.

GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

The fourth point is: God is a consuming fire. That statement is made in Hebrews 12:28, 29. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire." What did the apostle say? "For our God is a consuming fire." Just as surely as God is a God of love, he is also a "consuming fire." There are two facets of God; one is shown toward the righteous, and the other to the wicked. On one side we find life; on the other side is death; for our God is not only love, he is also light. The love of God and the purity of God is not only love, he is also light. The love of God and the purity of God are two different things. While God is love, yet because God is pure, he cannot associate with evil; the love of God does not bring the light of God in conjunction with that which is evil. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ had to die that man might be purged from his sins in order that a purified man might be able to associate with God. It required the blood of Christ to take away the stain of sin before man might live with God, for without purification there is no life.

Man cannot associate with God except on God's terms. For such association God had to provide the means by which man could be rescued --by which man could be purified and redeemed. Redeemed from what? Punishment! Just as God is love, just as surely God is light, and just as surely as the purity and righteousness of God are the reward of the righteous, so the justice of God will bring wrath upon the head of everyone who disobeys him. If we reject the law of

God, the law of God's Son, the only thing we can expect is the wrath of God, because the scriptures define God as being "a consuming Fire." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:" We need to realize the greatness and the power of God, but more than that, we need to realize that the power of God will be exerted in destroying the sinner.

Now, II Thessalonians 1:7-9 which contains a promise of God, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" again, the apostle tells us not to avenge ourselves. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Literally, we are to step back and let God take our place, "for vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Our God is a consuming fire. We must remember then that God is God. We must see God in all his powers.

A SUMMARY

Very briefly, to summarize this lesson, let us notice then that God is not man, he does not resemble man except in a general way in that God has formed man in his image. Second, that man can never find God of and by himself, but rather we can know God only as he has revealed himself through the Bible: Third, that God is eternal. He is not temporary, but "from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Fourth, we have found that God is all-wise and therefore knows everything. Fifth, God is everywhere, and, hence, there is no way we can escape from him. Sixth, God is all-powerful, and there is no way that we can successfully oppose him. Seventh, you are going to stand before God's Son to be judged; and there is nothing you can do against him.

If you wish to be saved, if you want to escape condemnation in the day of judgment, you can escape it by doing the things which God requires of you. You must do it on God's terms. Who are you that you should stand before the God of the universe; that you should question God's wisdom, and dispute his authority, saying, "I don't think that God cares," "I don't think it makes any difference"? To reject God's love by indifference and scorn day after day is to endanger our precious souls. To let our frail human pride stand between us and God is foolhardy. When we won't humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God because our feelings are hurt, or because of our emotions, because we love something in this world, or because we want an easier way than God's way, does not reflect any credit on our judgment. If we reject the God of the universe, a God that is so powerful that the human mind cannot comprehend his greatness, his power and glory; are we not extremely foolish? Sufficient that it might be said that when the final trumpet shall sound, that when before the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the brightness of his glory, the very heavens shall pass away with a great noise. The earth which has been stained with the sins of man will be unable to withstand the brightness of that glory but will explode with great force. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night and the earth will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up. When we consider the fact that this old world itself will acknowledge the power of God; the mighty oceans, though miles deep, will evaporate in a moment of time; we realize how important it is that we be obedient to God. God brought the universe into existence by the word; He gave life to mankind. Some of these days Jesus will speak again and the graves shall yield up the dead. The mighty waves of the sea were stilled at the command of Jesus; only man in his sins, only man in his pride and egotism, dares to raise his puny hand against the God that made him. He alone dares to rob the Giver of life, of the most priceless possession in the universe--his immortal soul. He will spot, stain, and drag it down into destruction. If Jesus

did not dare to take it upon himself to change one thing of God's will, but obeyed him in all things; what is man that he dares to change God's will to suit himself?

The very creation in perfect harmony and order obeys the will of its Creator, even so we also should submit our souls to his keeping.

THE IDEALISM OF GOD

The word idealism is defined as "Acting according to one's belief of what ought to be." Which means that we have a consciousness of changes that need to be made that we might live according to our position in life; or what we ought to be in God's sight.

God made man in his own image--after this own likeness and it was the divine purpose that man should be like his Creator. That means that man is supposed to live according to high and holy principles. But man under the influence of Satan for the most part, lives directly opposite to the purposes of God. But the Lord loves man and throughout the six thousand years of recorded history has sought to bring man back to his original purity.

Scarcely had man been placed in the beautiful Garden of Eden, surrounded by all the delights that could bring happiness to Adam and Eve till the awful influence of Satan sought to lead man away from God. Satan's very first temptation succeeded in alienated man from God by his deceptive words and false statement till both the man and woman were entrapped in the web of sin. Driven from the beautiful Garden and turned out into the world; their state was radically changed. And the sentence of physical death was pronounced upon them, but God did not leave them without hope. A being would come into the world who would bruise Satan's head. (Gen. 3:15.)

The divine record passes briefly over 1600 years of man's history giving only the record of births and deaths, but recording the thrilling record of the righteous Enoch who

lived in such purity that he was able to escape the power of death. However, the subsequent history of man is a shameful record of Satan's victories. The time came when the vast majority of men lived so wickedly that it is stated that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen. 6:5) And so the Lord doomed the human race to destruction. But be it ever remembered that God never destroys the righteous with the wicked, and as the man Noah and his three sons walk with God, the Lord made provisions whereby they and their wives could be saved from the destructive flood. After a year of floating on the turbid water, their ark safely landed on Mt. Arrarat. This little group must have stared with startled eyes at a world that for over twelve months had been covered with water. The marks of destruction were everywhere, but the voice of God assured them that never again would such destruction occur, and the beautiful rainbow that spanned the skies were the visible pledge of God's promise. But man is slow to learn and the persuasive power of Satan, is ever felt in the hearts of men; and so in a few years, as the human race reseeded the earth, men became indifferent to the desires of the Lord and again they rejected God's ways.

After many years God chose Abraham, the friend of God to be the progenitors of a new group of people that were to be called the "chosen of God." Abraham waited a hundred years for the fulfillment of God's promise of a seed through whom the sinful world might be led back to God.

In course of time Abraham's seed grew in a mighty throng, and in the course of time were settled in the Promised Land with the Tabernacle as the visible evidence of God's presence. A priesthood was chosen and a system of worship instituted whereby they had daily reminders of the one true and living God. But even that did not subdue the sinful inclinations of men. Kings were given most of whom were more concerned with obtaining wealth and power rather than leading the people and so through several hundred years the Jews drifted father and farther from God. Sending prophet after prophet

to lead them to repentance, the time finally came when the patience and forbearance reached its limit, "till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16). But God did not give up his people; the desire in his heart to lead them to "the Fountain of living waters" was strong, so a remnant of Israel was restored to their land; the temple rebuilt and the worship restored. Israel was cured of their besetting sin, idolatry, but still they had not learned the meaning and the glory of personal devotion. They became hide-bound legalists—more concerned with keeping the technical details of the law rather than living in God and for Him. The height of their idealism was keeping the minute details of the law rather than having a personal experience of knowing God. Cruelly prejudiced, boastful and proud they rejected the plea of the Lord to serve him in reverence and godly fear.

The Lord was now prepared to try the last and final effort he would make to install in human hearts the idealism of a pure heart and lofty desires, and so he sent his only begotten Son to set an example before the world of mankind of what it means to please the heavenly Father. Jesus would not only teach by words but by example. He was one who was "Holy, harmless and undefiled and separate from sinner, and tempted in all points like we are. (Heb. 15,16; 7:26) The notorious infidel, Robert Ingersol, once said of Christ, "I pay him the homage of my admiration and my tears." Pilate, his judge said, "I find in him no fault at all," and that has been the decision of the entire world who with unprejudiced hearts have studied the life and character of Jesus Christ. Truly the poet has said, "He the great exemplar is and pattern is." His character, his love and his passionate desire to save man, exemplifies that of God. God's idealism is to raise man from the muck and mire of sin and place him on the pure wind swept hills of faith, purity and love. He is calling you to a higher and nobler life than a life that is lived according to the "lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life." Why live in filth when you can live in purity? And find the "peace that passeth all understanding." Can Satan who hates God give you more than the God whose love passeth all

understanding? Think! The pleasures of sin are like the apples of Sodom that turn to ashes in your mouth.

Pleasures are like poppies round us spread,
You grasp them once and the flower is dead,
Or like a snowflake on the river,
One moment it is white and then lost forever.

The call of God for high idealism in life is strong and clear. "Turn ye from your sins for why will ye die, O House of Israel." "Come unto me," pleads Jesus, and I will give you rest. The beckoning of God's hand waves in urgent invitation, and the voice of the Saviour pleads "Come up higher — come up higher." Will you come and enjoy the imperishable riches of God?

GOD'S POWER IN CREATION

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." That is the opening statement of the greatest book--the Bible. David declared, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap: He layeth up the depth in storehouses...For he spake and it was done: he commanded and it stood fast." Psalms 33:6,7,9. "Through faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen are not made of the things which do appear." Hebrews 11:3.

These three inspired writers do not argue the case. They state what to them were indisputable facts. It is hard to conceive of a time when there were no worlds, but everything has its beginning. The date of the world's creation is not given. It is hard to think of a time when there were no worlds, but there exists in our great universe unnumbered suns, planets, moons, and stars which man cannot number.

The mind of man cannot conceive of the vastness of the universe about us. The world's largest telescope which is on Mt. Palamore in Southern California reveals hundreds of planets that cannot be seen by the naked eye; and the astronomers state that there is every reason to believe that far beyond the space revealed by the gigantic telescope there are yet unnumbered worlds beyond the reach of that telescope. Let us not be so foolish as to suggest these gigantic worlds all came by chance. Unless we admit God's power in creation how can we explain how all these great planets revolve in their calm, mysterious constancy, in the same orbits at the

same rate of speed, for thousands of years? No wonder David declared, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork--day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

And there is the creation of man. The first chapter of Genesis gives us a genealogy of creation. But man and woman were the last and final creatures created. The creeping things, the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea and the beast of the sea all were created before man's advent. I think there is no scientist that can accurately number the manifold number of species that find their habitation on this earth. From the tiniest insect to the gigantic animals that walk the earth, the number of species are so infinite that we exclaim with David, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom has thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches." Psalms 104:24; and the amazing thing about these unnumbered species is that each one is a separate creation. There are no half-way species among them although there are similarities. It is true today that "Everything brought forth after its kind." Gen.1:12. The various species do not interbreed except in various unusual instances, and then their productions are infertile hybrids that cannot reproduce themselves.

Now we come to man, the crowning creative act of God. "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." What a creature is man! In intellect man is as far above all the creatures that there is truly no real comparison between him and the highest creatures. The monkeys are in some physical respects similar to man yet there is a vast chasm between man and the chattering apes. There is intellectually no comparison between man and the apes. The Bible states that God created man in his own image, not in the image of an ape! What a remarkable creature is man. He is composed of thousands of living cells. Many glands so essential to life and his numerous organs all point to the fact that man came from the hand of a super intelligent creator. It is a thousand times more absurd to

assume that man came into existence by soulless, inanimate forces than to affirm that our very modern cars with their mechanical perfections are the product of blind chance. There are glands in the human body, very small and located precisely in the right place which if removed would result in the man's death. We can exclaim with David who stated, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalms 139:14. An eye doctor was asked why he did not study other parts of the human body besides the eye, replied in substance, I cannot in a lifetime learn all there is regarding the eye, and I have no time left to study other parts of the body." Truly the human body bears the imprint of divine wisdom! Man could not fly to the farthest stars without mechanical wings though he can explain in scientific terms the origin of the human body. Even the human hand so capable and useful reveals a wisdom in its composition. A mechanical hand is not something that belongs to the irrevocable past, but that power today is just as potent as it was when his authoritative voice of God created the giant Jupiter. The same power that created them, today controls their unceasing movements in the vast universe. In Hebrews 1:3 the statement is made, "Upholding all things by the word of his power," which implies God's continued power in regulating the vast universe he has created.

There has been a lot of loose talk to the effect that "God is dead" to the confusion of many of our untaught young people. If God is dead then his power no longer operates. But the recent eclipse of the sun demonstrates the fact that God's power still regulates the movement of the heavenly bodies; and we are sure that such a condition will continue as long as the universe remains.

And all of the above applies equally to Christ for in Isaiah 9:6 he is spoken of in prophesy as "the everlasting Father" indicating that he is co-equal with God, and this is further confirmed by Phil. 26 where he is regarded as being equal to the Father-equal in power, wisdom and divinity; equal in everyway except in origin. In Rev. 3:14 he is spoken as the

“beginning of the creation of God” and being in the form of God he is as eternal as God himself.

And this brings us to the glorious thought that if Christ is eternal we also shall share in the eternal blessings of his eternal home. Has He not informed us that he is preparing a home for us? John 14:1,2 And that home will be as imperishable as his own glorious person? In view of the above what greater incentive could we have to live righteously and walk humbly before our God? This fleeting life with its unceasing cares, sorrows, and afflictions will be forever swallowed up in the glorious tomorrow of unfading joys and peace. A life-long period of suffering will be forgotten in the eternal bliss of never ending joys that have no ending.

THE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

My father who was a gospel preacher, was on a train going to an appointment, and as the train was rather crowded, he shared his seat with a gentleman. This man seemed to judge by father's appearance that he was a preacher, and declared that he was an agnostic, and stated to my father, "If you have a God trot him out and let me take a look at him." Father quietly asked, "Do you mean to say that you cannot believe in anything unless you can see it? And the man replied, "I guess that is correct." Father asked him, "Do you believe you have any brains?" The man was indignant and said, "Of course I do," and father said, "Did you ever see them?" and the man was silent. The idea that we have to see God with our physical eyes in order to believe in Him is an absurdity. Because the evidence of God is everywhere. We can hear him in the thunders of the storm and in the moaning of the ocean. We can and do see Him in the unnumbered thousands of stars in the blue firmament far above us. He is seen in the beauty of the flowers and in a mother's deep love for her babe nursing at her breast. In Kings Canyon in California I have seen the world's largest tree, a giant Sequoia named General Sherman, some 100 feet in diameter. A tiny insect not as large as a pin head can lay an egg that will kill the largest man. A tiny blade of grass that with thousands of others beautifies our lawns, cannot be explained without the admission that there is a God. That blade of grass has life and only a God could give life. All the scientists in the world cannot explain the origin of life.

Staying in the home of a biology teacher, he once showed

me a little bottle which appeared to be filled with muddy water. He said to me, "Wait a couple of days and I'll show you something in this water. A few days later he called me into his study and held up that bottle of water saying, "Now I'll show you something." A large microscope was on the table before him and he took a little glass strip not much more than an inch wide. He wet his finger with the water and smeared it on the glass and then said "Take a look." When I looked I was utterly dumbfounded for in that smear of water there appeared numerous tiny creatures of diverse sizes, shapes and colors. Just a smear of water contained those indescribable little creatures! Did nature produce them? Absurd. Nature produces nothing that has had no prior existence. It only reveals what has been created, and only a God of unlimited wisdom and power could produce a tiny mosquito whose bite can lay a man low with the dread malaria. The germ of life in many billion forms reveal a mind and a power far beyond man's power of perception. Several years ago some men invented and made a vessel that enabled them to descend in the deepest depths of the ocean. This was near the Philippine Islands where the oceans depths reaches some seven miles. As we well know man cannot live beyond a certain depth of the ocean because of the weight of the water, yet in the vessel in which they descended they were enabled to reach ocean's bottom safely, and at all different depths of the ocean there was life at each level. Life existed that was adapted to the different levels. This would call for thousands of different forms of life. Only God could make such an arrangement of which man cannot explain. Only the wisdom of God could explain it.

Two men one an Arab and the other a Frenchman, who was an infidel, were traveling across the great desert of Africa. The first night out after they made camp the Arab took from his tent a rug and walking a short distance from his tent he spread the rug on the sand and knelt with uplifted hands for a few moments, then rolling up his rug he started to his tent. The Frenchman had stood with folded arms and a sneer on his face. He stopped the Arab and asked "What were

you doing out there?" The Arab replied, "I was praying to Allah" (The Arab's name for God). The Frenchman asked, "Did you ever see God?" The Arab replied "No." Did you ever hear God? and the Arab replied "No," then the Frenchman said, "Did you ever touch him?" to which the Arab said "NO." Well, the Frenchman said, "You're a queer Arab to believe in a God you never saw, never heard and never touched." The Arab made no immediate reply. They arose early in the morning and the Frenchman stated, "Say, there was a camel lose around these tents last night. The Arab asked, "How do you know, did you see him?" The Frenchman replied, "No." The Arab persisted, "Did you hear him?" and the Frenchman said, "No." Finally the Arab asked did you touch him? The Frenchman said "No." "Well," the Arab said, "You are a queer Frenchman to believe that there was a camel here when you did not see, hear, nor touch him." The Frenchman exultingly said, "But just look, there are his tracks." And sure enough the camel's tracks were so clearly visible in the soft sands of the desert. The Arab stood silent a few moments when just then the sun peeped above the eastern horizon. The Arab raised a trembling hand and in a voice that throbbed with emotion, cried, "Behold the handprints of Almighty God!" If the camel's tracks proved the existence of a camel, the glorious sun, located in the star decked heavens, gave infallible proof of the existence of a divine Creator.

Long ago David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Psalms 19:1,2. The camel's tracks could no more be explained without admitting the existence of a camel, than can the unnumbered suns, stars, planets be explained without admitting the existence of a Creator. Paul once declared "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20.

A famed poet declared "Only God could make a tree" and

the billions of trees that beautify earth's surface are living proof of the power of God.

In every person there is a tiny gland at the base of the neck called the pituitary gland. It is very small, only about the size of a pea weighing less than an ounce, and yet that tiny object is all important to any person's health. Is it not strange that such a small object should have such power on a man's health, his growth and even his life? Did nature place that tiny gland there? If so, explain how nature can perform such a task. The power of life, health or death is in that small gland. Only a divine mind could make such an arrangement. And in every tiny seed there is the germ of life, which could not come of itself. Only life can produce life, and we respectfully ask, what life produced life. And it is most significant that, as the Holy Book declares "Everything brings forth after its kind." Such a law of nature could not come of itself. Without admitting the existence of God, man has some difficult questions to answer.

And when we consider all these things, we agree with David who declared "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." Psalms 14:1. And now I wish to quote a poem I learned many years ago. It is the reply of the comet in reply to a question as to whether it, in its vast orbit ever saw or found a place where there was no God.

Beyond the glittering worlds of light,
For ages past I've been employed;
And in my vast and rapid flight,
I've found no place of God devoid.

Creation's grandeurs I've surveyed
And seen its riches stored abroad,
But far beyond where thought has strayed
The ample space was filled with God.

I've soared around the burning sun
And gazed where mortals never dared;
And in the jourings I have run,
Have always found that God was there.

In all that vast unmeasured flight,
Through which my piercing view I dart,
No place without a God I've found,
But in the Atheist's withered heart.

THE ETERNITY OF GOD

“Lord thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” Thus declared David in Psalms 90:1,2.

I think there is no word harder to define than the word everlasting, which means without beginning nor ending. Man measures everything by time. Our calendars record the centuries, years, months, weeks and days. Each day has its beginning and its ending. The average span of life is in the scriptures limited to three-score and ten. Psalms 90:10. But most of the ancient Worthies exceeding that many years and today the span of life is steadily increasing. But even at that man's days occupy but a few fleeting years. When a man is born his birth is celebrated and announcement cards are mailed. The day of his death is recorded in the obituary columns. How few are his years compared with the eternity of God! Job spoke of how his days are “swifter than a weaver's shuttle” which blends in the months and days that are no more enduring than a flower. The many thousands of cemeteries that dot the landscape all testify to the impermanence of man. Great men have lived and attained to power and prominence, today all we know of the Caesars, Napoleons, Aga Khans and Hitlers are written on the pages of perishable history. Granite monuments reveal the record of their great deeds but death came and those great men became only inanimate dust. The period of their power occupied only a moment of times as we count the years of the past.

Their power that ruled the nations is now as weak as yesterday's thunder that bellowed in the heavens. In then is fulfilled the words of the poet--

The boast of heardry, the pomp of power
And all that power and fame ere gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

How great was the power of God when he spake the unnumbered worlds into existence, and as the discoveries of space reveal the magnitude of God's great power that brought into existence the vast and unnumbered worlds, and yet God's power is not lessened by the passing of years. His creative power is not being used to our knowledge, but the entire universe is under his control which requires supervision and physical power. Paul in Heb. 1:3 speaks of how God upholds all things by the word of His power; which is stating that God has control of all the things of his creation. The orderly movements of the gigantic planets in the great universe, is all the evidence we need that his power today is as great as when the morning stars sang together at the dawn of creation.

Human intelligence is far too limited to conceive of the magnitude of God's creative power. The giant Jupiter, thousands of times larger than our earth is claimed by astronomers to be small in comparison to other planets that swing their way through their vast orbits of space. The poverty of human language is too great to express the magnitude of God's unlimited power. David realizing this said in Psalms 8:3, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained. What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" And this brings us to David's unanswerable argument "The heaven declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." And we agree with his severe statement "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." Psalms 14:1. Haley's comet which appeared in 1914 and attracted so much

comment, has such an extensive orbit that it will not return for 75 years from that date. How vast must be its orbit! And who can comprehend the unnumbered planets, suns and stars across whose pathway that comets travel in its flight through the universe!! Could anything less than the power of God make such a sphere whose flight is more accurate than the best made watch?

The farmer plows his land in the spring and plants his seed. Some of the seed may be as small as the head of a pin; but within that tiny seed is a microscope germ of life which under the influence of the sun's rays and moistened by the rain, it goes through a mysterious process called germination, and soon the green blade appears. Through the late spring and summer that blade grows, it matures and soon dozens of seeds just like the original one appears and the farmer has a crop as a reward for his labors. Where did the germ of life come from? The seasons come and the seasons go and each succeeding season produces its crop whereby the earth is covered with verdure that delights the eye, feeds man and the numerous animals. The lovely song birds that sing so beautifully in the early spring, builds its nest, obtains its mate and soon the nest is filled with eggs each the same size and color. In a few weeks cracks appear in the egg shells and then the chirping of baby chicks comes from the nest. The parent birds are diligent in supplying food to the brood that grows into creatures their exact size and color. As the frosts of autumn appear those birds take to wing and they make their way to the warm lands of the south. With the coming of spring, those birds thoughts turn to their former home and soon great flocks of them fill the skies. Most of them are unerringly guided back to their former nest where they lay their eggs, hatch another brood and thus perpetuate the bird life of earth.

The salmon returns from the sea and make their way to the exact place of their birth, lay their eggs which are fertilized according to the laws of nature. Those eggs hatch into fingerlings which grow into fish the exact image of their parents, and so the waters bring forth according to the divine

law. How can a fish relocate its former home and there engage in the process of reproduction? The eels that hatch in the English waters are somewhat different in form from those hatched in American waters, but when they are mature, both kinds meet in the Caribbean waters and there they spend several months. At the approach of winter they return to their home waters; but the English eels never are found in the American waters, nor are the American eels ever found in English waters. What or who tells them of their nationality? Does nature? Absurd! Nature teaches nothing.

Nature does not have a mind or intelligence. Who but God could teach the above things? Nature only manifests the power and wisdom of God. It has no creative power or sustaining power. A famous poet stated in a well known poem "Only God could make a tree." How true! The small object lying under the oak tree which we call an acorn, is the seed of the Oak. When planted it is only a small sprout, but give it a few years and it becomes the mighty oak. The life implanted in the seed came originally from God, who created all things and arranged that everything should bring forth after its kind. Gen. 1:12. The number of plants, grains, grasses, trees, etc. is infinitesimal, and yet each is a separate specie with its own characteristic of size, color and seedlings.

GOD'S POWER IN SALVATION

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greeks.” Romans 1:16

A world in sin was the grief of God. He hated sin, but loved the sinner, and to save all sinners was the earnest desire of his heart. 2 Peter 3:9 states that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But God will not save man from his sins independent of man's own cooperation. Sin brings estrangement between God and man. Isaiah states a solemn fact “Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face that he will not hear.”

A sinful heart is in rebellion to God and as such he cannot be in fellowship with the Lord. With the whole world lying in sin, the Lord decided there must be some means whereby the heart of man must be reached, so that he will turn from sin and render obedience to God.

In times past the Lord sent many prophets as messengers to plead with erring man to turn from their sins that they might be reconciled to God. But all such efforts failed as Ezekiel 18:32 demonstrates when the Lord pleaded “For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves and live.” Inasmuch as “The wages of sin is death” Romans 6:23, and inasmuch as that death is certain, it is imperative that man's sinful heart should be reached so that he may be saved from an eternity

of suffering. This is something God does not desire. The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7) illustrates this fact. The sinner lost upon the mountains of sin, is diligently sought by the loving shepherd. And so the mercies of God ordained that there should be some means whereby the lost ones may return to the shepherd and bishop of their souls.

The means that the Lord has provided are wonderful and effective if man will only hear and obey. Paul most emphatically declares that the gospel of Christ is the one and only means of man's salvation. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 declares the facts of the gospel to consist of the fact that Christ died for our sins; that he was buried, and that he rose again. This is to declare the soul stirring facts that can turn a sinner from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Jesus said of himself, "And I if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." This he spake signifying what manner of death he would die; and so when we preach "Christ and him crucified, we are using the divinely ordained means whereby the sinful hearts of men can be reached. This reminds us of Paul's unforgettable statement, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." 1 Cor. 2:2 That gospel he preached all over Asia Minor for some 35 or 40 years with the result that thousands were released from Satan's horrible power. This apostle affirmed that it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. That preaching was not and is not foolishness, for remember, it is God's power unto salvation." Rom. 1:16 The scoffers and rebellious ones look upon it as foolishness, but to the humble hearts who long for a happy relationship with God, they find in it the strong influence that will purify their lives and unite them to God.

In 1 Cor. 6:9-11 we have Paul's remarkable statement, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Then we are astonished beyond measure

that Paul after mentioning about all the vile sins in the black catalogue of iniquity, declares "But such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God." How wonderful! The chains of sin were broken, and bondage to Satan. He no longer lives for the gratification of the lust of the flesh, for the spirituality that makes one like unto the sinless son of God. In them is fulfilled the wonderful promise "Though your sins be as scarlet: they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The staggering drunkard no longer drinks from the intoxicating cup that saps his manhood and renders him unfit for any decent work. It takes the sneaking thief who under the cover of darkness, pilfers the property of another; and the foul mouthed blasphemer's language becomes the language of a dignified man. In a word the man is changed. A new heart brings a new life and the new life effects a change of character. Is not this quite wonderful? There is only one thing that can effect such a change and that is the gospel of Christ which is God power unto salvation. We praise God for this wonder working power!

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

The word "Idealism" is defined as "acting according to one's belief of what ought to be." In other words it means that one's life is regulated by high and lofty principles, principles that one would like to see adopted by all other people. To illustrate, an idealist is one who would make our government an utopia, and would make each life an example of purity, kindness and love.

The character of God is spotless as was that of his Holy Son, Jesus Christ who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. And we remember the apostle quoted the Lord as saying, "Be ye holy for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15 During the Jewish age God lived in the most Holy Place in the Tabernacle, and even the ground upon which he appeared to his servants was "holy ground." Exodus 3:5 In the book of Isaiah the expression "The holy one of Israel" is found 29 times, and other places similar expressions are found. If there was anything that God emphasized it was his holiness and his prophets who revealed his truth made it plain that holiness was the exact center of God's character; and the greatest desire of God is that his creature man should be like him, and so we repeat the words of Peter quoting the words of the Lord "Be ye holy for I am holy."

When the man and woman at the instigation of Satan fell into Satan's web of deceit, the Lord was indeed highly displeased, and the entire human race was and is condemned to physical death. "For the wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23 But while man still lives in this world God pleads with man to live for the high and grand things of life. Every inducement

the divine Father could give to persuade man to live righteously and pure in this life is given by the Lord. But the world's saddest story is that man prefers the pleasures of sin and the service of Satan more than the peace, and happiness of a holy life. God truly loves the human race and his desire for mankind's happiness and welfare is beyond man's ability to express.

Great was the Lord's grief when man yielded to Satan's temptation. Immediately plans were set in motion to redeem man from the folly of sin and moral debasement.

To live the high and holy life which God desired, the Lord realized the necessity of an exemplar. For four thousand years man continued in Satan's embrace, and the time came when man fell so deeply in sin that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5 It appears that the purity of Noah and his family did not endure and when men multiplied on the earth, sin also multiplied, and so the Lord choose the seed of Abraham to be circulating teachers of the knowledge of the one true and living God. When the law of Moses was given at Mt. Sinai, many and varied were the restrictions placed upon the Israelites as to their moral conduct and their religious conduct. But the seed of Abraham were afflicted with a perpetual backsliding. Jeremiah 8:5 Prophet after prophet was sent to them to call them back to God, but the messages of the prophets were received with cold hearts and disdain, and the time came when God could no longer forebear. One prophet declared, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, so the nation was doomed to at least a temporal eclipse, because there was no remedy. 2 Chron. 36:16 Israel went into captivity in Babylon. On their return they had been cured of the sin of idolatry; but they never had the saving grace of personal and national devotion to God.

God then saw that it was time for an exemplar to appear, not just to save Israel but to save the entire world if only the world would listen. How difficult it was for the Son of God to get the ear of the world; and the difficulty still remains to a great extent. Jesus once said, "He that sent me is with me;

the Father hath not left me alone. I speak to the world those things I have heard of him." The self-righteous and prejudiced scorned his words and hated him, but the humble and unprejudiced marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. He was God personified. Once he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also," and the important fact was and is that he lived a life of spotless purity. Paul declared of him "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sin and made higher than the heavens." Heb. 7:26 Paul declared that he was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin." Through Christ, God presents to all mankind the one and only example of absolute purity and holiness; and now began a new era in the world's moral and religious history. Christ's call to the "weary and heavy laden" affected the hearts of untold millions and the world experienced a revival. The wicked were not being drowned in a flood of water, as in the days of Noah, but in a flood of love. The idealism of God personified in the person of the sinless Son began a work of reformation that moves onward in our own day. The Gospel of Christ that revealed his death, burial and resurrection, pierced the hearts of the world's sin laden thousands and high idealism took the place of sensuality. Thieves became honest, adulterers became pure, idolators turned from the worship of man-made gods to the worship of the sinless one ruling on a throne of glory in the highest heavens. The nobility of his character, the purity of his life and the urgency of his calls to higher living has affected the world as has nothing in the six thousand years of recorded history. Robert G. Ingersol, the notorious Infidel, who received a thousand dollars for a lecture, once in a moment of rare honesty said of Christ, "*I pay him the homage of my admiration and my tears.*" For two thousand years the character of Christ has endured the scrutiny of a scoffing, sinful world, and so far not one spot, not one blemish has been discovered on the character of the Son of God. Pilate as his judge said of Him, "I find in him no fault at all." The beauty and fragrance of the flowers and the grandeur of the mountains are as nothing compared to the

person of Jesus of Nazareth. He who declared himself to be "meek and lowly in heart" asks that you follow him.

He asks that the deeds and temptations of the flesh and the allurements of the wicked Satan be forgotten and that you should walk in the paths of purity that leads to the great white throne of God where an eternity of happiness awaits. Do you long for a happier and more satisfying life? Then listen to Christ who is calling, "Come to me and I will give you rest." If we walk after the flesh we shall die, but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body we shall live. Rom 8:13

The pleasures of sin are like poppies round us spread;
We grasp them once and the flower is dead;
Or like a snowflake on the river,
One moment it is white and then lost forever.

But the pathway of the just reveals pleasures that lead to the eternal day. The divine voice of the world's Redeemer, is calling to you, "Come up higher, and learn of the beautiful idealism of God."

GOD OUR FATHER

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Gal. 3:26 There is no passage in the scriptures that should cheer and impress the hearts of Christians as does the above verse. The contrast between God and man is too great for human words to express, and yet the word of God makes it abundantly clear that the great eternal God is our father!

Man was created in the image of God and bears his likeness, and God loves him! David declared, “Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” Psalms 103:13 Which means that God’s attitude toward man is exactly as that of a father. And he is our father if we have been born into his kingdom, by the New Birth (John 3:5).

How well I remember the night my firstborn child was born. I held him in my arms, and I was thrilled unspeakably. He was of my flesh and of my blood. Today that baby is a man grown nearing the age of 50. Awhile ago I talked with him and rejoiced in our relationship. He will always be my son. And always I will love him. I depend on him so much. The Lord has blest me with six children and a step-daughter, and how I love them all! Great is my desire to always set before them the proper example so that they will walk in righteousness before the Divine father.

A father has great responsibilities and a heavy load of care. While the children are young and dependent on us for food, clothing and other provisions, the father will not look upon such things as burdens, but as gracious privileges conferred on him by the divine Creator.

As a father the Lord is anxious to supply his children with proper food. The first man and woman were placed in the Garden of Eden and were permitted to eat of all the fruits found therein except the fruit on the tree of Knowledge of good or evil. Otherwise man had an abundance of the most nourishing food. After the flood permission was given man to eat animal food with the restriction that they were not to eat the blood for the eating of blood was strictly forbidden then and now. Acts 15:20, Leviticus 17:10-11 The reason for this restriction is that the "Blood is the life of the flesh." It is that which maketh atonement. Under the Jewish law there were meats clean and unclean. God was testing Israel's willingness to obey, but under the gospel all meats are clean if received with thanksgiving. 1 Timothy 4:3

Jesus declared himself to be the Bread of Life, John 6:35, and also declared eating of him shall eternally abolish hunger, John 6:51, and in the heavenly home we are assured that we shall hunger no more for the tree of life that grows on the banks of the river of life bears fruit in abundance. While Israel was in the wilderness, the Lord sent them "angel's food," because it came from heaven, Psalms 78:25, but the food prepared for us in heaven is different. This will not be the "dainty food" prepared by earth's cooks, but prepared by the Lord of Heaven. Our provisions will be eternally produced by the Father of all, because of his deep love for his children.

Clothing - When Adam and Eve sinned in Eden, they were first made to realize their nakedness and so they made themselves clothing of fig leaves, but the Lord prepared animal skins that were more durable. Since that time, mankind has been concerned with clothing. The fashions and styles change constantly. Today many women seemingly wish to appear as naked as Mother Eve, regardless of the Lord's instruction to wear modest apparel. 1 Timothy 2:9 This is the shame of the modern woman. They flaunt their physical charms and neglect the development of real womanly character. We are sure that this does not please the heavenly

Father, who prepares the white garments of righteousness and purity.

The inspired prophet speaks of how he is clothed with garments of salvation and "covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isaiah 61:10 This applies to the spiritual state of man now, but in the heavenly home the children of the Lord are revealed as "clothed in white robes" and carrying palm leaves in their hands, victorious over sin, Satan and death. The divine Father makes this possible, and only his love and power can make it possible. *What a Father!* Truly God giveth food to the hungry, Psalms 146:7, and the food provided us in that heavenly home will never fail. It will be provided eternally.

Again, we speak of the home the Lord has provided for his children. Our vocabulary is most too limited to describe that home. Jesus told his disciples that he was going to prepare a home for us. John 14:1-2 If the Lord could make the unlimited stars and planets of heaven, what may we expect of the home prepared for His children. Revelations 20, 21 and 22 all speak in descriptive, beautiful words of that home.

A home where changes never come
Nor pain, nor sorrow, toil nor care,
Yet tis a bright and blessed home;
Who would not fain be resting there?

It is made plain that the Father will spare no power, nor leave undone anything that will beautify and adorn that home. No sin, no sorrow, no weeping, and above all things there will be no death there. Eternal love, eternal joy and never ending pleasures will be the heritage of God's children. A thousand years of service can never earn such a home. It will be given simply and solely because of a Father's infinite love and affection. The walls of Jasper, the gates of Pearl and the streets of gold are only illustrative of the spiritual values in that home that knows no night and no sorrow. The loved and lost of earth families will be there. We may not know them as we knew them here, but to know that eternally we will be with them joyfully, safe and blessed will be joy unspeakable and full of glory. But I am sure that the greatest

gift of heaven will be the fact that we will be in the presence of the eternal Father. Just what a joy it will be to see God, our Father, as he is. I have seen two presidents of foreign nations and a half dozen or more of our American presidents, but they were only men. How different to see the fact of him who is the fairest among ten thousands and one altogether lovely. To see the God who made the heavens and the earth, and one who possesses all wisdom and all power, what a most gracious privilege that will be! We have the divine promise "And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." Revelations 22:4 Then will be fulfilled the sacred promise "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8 And not only will we see him, but the sacred promise is "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:2 To be rid of this body of flesh with its afflictions; it aches and pains together with its unseemly lusts and desires, and be made into the very image of our divine, spiritual Father, what a hope and what a promise! Does not this all make the Christian life desirable and give to us a remarkable incentive to live for God? Could he as a Father promise more? Think on these things.