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According To The Purpose

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*"And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it--The purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one head in **Him**" (Eph. 1:9-10, Weymouth).*

Long before there was a world or any man, God, almighty and all wise, planned every detail of the whole creation from start to finish. He not only planned each detail of the earth itself but with infinite wisdom He planned your life and mine before the foundations of the earth were laid. 2 Tim. 1:9. He planned the moment and place of your birth, the circumstances that were to prevail throughout your life, your down-sittings and up-risings, the trials and tribulations, the joys and sorrows that were to have their part in shaping you according to His purpose. He knows the appointed times and how many ages He will spend to bring you to the perfection He planned for you before the world began. I am perfectly aware that this is NOT church tradition. This is not what we were taught from our youth nor is this commonly accepted doctrine, but I affirm that this is truth according to the Word of God, and it is also according to the true longing of your own spirit within you.

Did not Paul teach us that we were chosen in Him BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD when he said to Timothy, "Be thou partaker of the AFFLICTIONS OF THE GOSPEL according to the power of God, who hath saved, us and called us with an holy calling, not according to OUR WORKS, but ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." 2 Tim. 1:8, 9. And then again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ according as He hath

CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.... Eph. 1:3, 4.

There will come an unbelievable transformation to your understanding together with a fresh and vivid relationship with God when the revelation of this truth dawns upon your soul teaching you that God is the author and finisher of ALL THINGS. He is the FIRST and the LAST. He is the ALPHA and the OMEGA. Not only is it true that God was there at the beginning and will be there at the end, but also that God IS the beginning and God IS the end. He IS the Alpha and He IS the Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) and consequently He is all the letters in between. "I am He that IS and WAS and IS TO COME." ALL

THINGS, ALL THINGS had their beginning in Him and ALL THINGS, ALL THINGS will have their end in Him.

It is sad to say the least that for centuries Christians have taught that God is omniscient (ALL WISE) and yet they accuse Him of the grossest foolishness. Preachers have proclaimed that God is omnipotent (ALL POWERFUL) and in the next breath accuse Him of helplessness. They preach a God of love and in the next breath accuse Him of grotesque sadism that would make the tortures of Buchenwald look insignificant. The greatest need of Gods people today is to have a complete change of heart in their attitude and relationship to God. It is time for all men to see that God is GOD, ALL WISE, ALL POWERFUL, UNCHANGING, ETERNAL, glorious in power, fearful in praises, DOING WONDERS.

If God is all wise (omniscient), then there is no possibility of anything happening in all the universe without His knowledge. A God who numbers every hair of every head among the billions of earths inhabitants (Matt. 10:30) is certainly a God of infinite knowledge. A God who sees every sparrow that falls in death cannot be accused of inattention. And are ye not of more value than many sparrows? He has declared His knowledge of the THOUGHTS AND INTENTS of men's hearts, that He knows their thoughts AFAR OFF. Nothing is hidden from His eyes, nothing is beyond His knowledge, nothing is out of His presence. The light and the dark are both alike to Him. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Should we make our bed in hell, He is there. Psa. 139:8.

We have long believed, and with abundant scriptural backing, that God knows not only the present but every minute detail of the future. He knows the end of every matter from its beginning. The fact that well over half of the entire Bible deals with prophecy telling in intricate detail the vast array of events still to come should convince any man that the future is not kept secret from the mind of God. But it is NOT ENOUGH for you to believe that God KNOWS the future in all its intricate detail; you must thoroughly know that every MINUTE DETAIL of the future was planned and purposed by God and that NOTHING can possibly change or alter the plan, for God is immutable (unchanging) as well as omniscient and almighty.

There is a wonderful prayer found in Acts 4:23-28 that portrays the wisdom and foreknowledge of God and shows perfectly that everything that happens is ordained of God and is part of the eternal purpose. The disciples of Christ were under great persecution and in danger of death when they assembled for prayer to God. The following is the prayer they prayed: "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, 'Lord, THOU ART GOD, which hast made heaven and earth and sea and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine VAIN THINGS? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou has anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE.'"

Can anything be plainer than that? The crucifixion of Christ, the opposition to the apostles, the persecution of the church was appointed, ordained, and determined long before it happened by the counsel and the hand of God. Verse 28. I do not think it is necessary here to multiply scripture to prove that God not only KNOWS the future, but that He PLANS the future and that the thing that He plans is part of an ETERNAL PURPOSE that He purposed BEFORE THE AGES BEGAN. Everything is planned of God before it starts. Everything is BEFORE ORDAINED. The blueprint is complete in minutest detail before the program begins. Eternal wisdom forbids the need of making changes, alterations, or additions. The finite architects of earth sometimes are forced to do such things, but the architect of the universe who is omniscient never has such need. The beginning is certain and the end sure, for God IS the beginning and God IS the end.

There is one more thought that should be mentioned here. It is the truth of Gods omnipotence. God is ALMIGHTY. God is ALL POWERFUL. I do not need to tell stories or refer to acts of omnipotence to prove this point, for the whole Bible and the whole creation in heaven and earth and the universe breathe, proclaim,

shout and sing of the omnipotence of God. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and ALL THE HOST OF THEM." He speaks and myriads of worlds appear. He commands and they whirl away forever in their orbits. He says to oceans, "Thus far and no further: here shall thy proud waves be stayed," and mighty billows can but lash the shores and fall away at His command. "Praise ye Him, all His angels! Praise ye Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all ye stars of light! Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for HE COMMANDED AND THEY WERE CREATED. He hath also established them for ever and ever; He hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps: fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind FULFILLING HIS WORD: mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl; kings of earth and all people; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens, old men and children; Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent. His glory is above the earth and heaven." Psa. 148. By the word of the Lord were the HEAVENS MADE AND ALL THE HOSTS OF THEM. Angels and principalities and powers obey His wise immutable plans. He raiseth up kings and putteth them down. He sends forth His word and living things are created from things that are not. He speaks, and the whole face of the earth is renewed. He commands, and the sun hides its face at noon or retraces its steps in the sky. The stormy winds and the raging seas obey His ward. He hangeth the earth upon nothing. Not only were all things made BY HIM but all things were made FOR HIM. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, man, angels, principality and power ALL come from Him, were made for Him, and end in Him. Each existing thing, animate or inanimate, was designed for a purpose, and has a part in the great universal purpose of God. Nothing in heaven or earth was made without purpose. Nothing was made to exist without being part and parcel of the great eternal plan. Everything everywhere is a link in the eternal chain, everything a part of the purpose, everything a part of the plan, everything a cog in the intricate machine, every drop of water a part of the mighty ocean, every sunrise a part of eternal day.

One day during the Christmas rush I crowded along with the multitudes of shoppers on a Chicago street. People by the tens of thousands thronged about, all intent on their own little plan. Very few, I imagine, had any thoughts of God. Still fewer I knew anything of His purpose. Perhaps not one in a hundred I had that day read Gods word or lifted their hearts to Him in prayer. As I grew weary of being jostled about by so great a throng, I said within myself, "Lord, WHY DID YOU EVER MAKE ALL THESE PEOPLE?" And as though the Lord was speaking to me, He replied, "I HAVE A PURPOSE FOR EVERY ONE OF THEM." Ah, what a revelation of truth that was to my heart and what an infinite change it has made!

Can you not see what a vital, transforming difference is made to your understanding when you see PURPOSE, PURPOSE, PURPOSE written in flaming letters over everything created and made in all heaven and earth? Can you not see what a vital difference it makes in your attitude toward ALL THINGS and ALL PEOPLE whether good or bad when you understand that PURPOSE is ever present, partly for their sake, partly for your sake, partly for the sake of creation, but above all things for Gods sake? My attitude toward the rebellious and wicked King Pharaoh was for years an attitude of scorn and distaste for such a hard-hearted, rebellious enemy of God until one day I read these words in Exo. 9, 15: "For now will I stretch out mine hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed FOR THIS CAUSE I RAISED THEE UP, FOR TO SHOW MY POWER AND THAT MY NAME MAY BE DECLARED-THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." Listen to the enlightened revelation of Paul as he speaks of Pharaoh and says "It is not to him that willeth or to him that runneth, but of GOD THAT SHOWETH MERCY. For the scripture says of PHARAOH, even for this same PURPOSE have I RAISED THEE UP that I might SHOW MY POWER IN THEE and that MY NAME might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and WHOM HE WILL HE HARDENETH." Rom. 9:16-18.

When I saw from this passage that PHARAOH was raised BY GOD for a DEFINITE PURPOSE just as Moses was raised up for a definite purpose, my whole attitude toward him had to change, for anything that is

a part of GODS PURPOSE must be treated with respect even though we do not understand it. Undoubtedly it was for this reason that Paul declared by the wisdom of the Spirit, "JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME until the Lord come who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the COUNSELS OF THE HEART: and THEN SHALL EVERY MAN HAVE PRAISE OF GOD." 1 Cor. 4:5. Just meditate on that statement and see how it transforms your thinking toward all men. We are so inclined to be full of bombastic judgment because we see things only through our narrow slit and thus we miss the greater wisdom that God has ordained it thus to bring some part of His plan to perfection. Truly in this we see through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face.

Because Michael, the strong and glorious archangel, understood Gods purpose and knew that even Satan had a part in that purpose, he would not bring a railing accusation against him but committed him to the Lords rebuke. How significant and terrible is the statement of Jude when he, speaking of men and their foolish judgments, says, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, DESPISE DOMINIONS, and SPEAK EVIL OF DIGNITIES. YET Michael the archangel, when contending with the DEVIL he disputed about the body of Moses, DURST NOT BRING AGAINST HIM A RAILING ACCUSATION; but said, The Lord rebuke thee. BUT THESE speak evil of those things WHICH THEY KNOW NOT; but what they KNOW NATURALLY as brute beasts in those things they corrupt themselves." Jude 8-10. Oh what a difference it makes in our attitude to and understanding of all creatures and all things when we see that divine PURPOSE is ever present. Did not Peter say that men who walk after the flesh DESPISE GOVERNMENTS, are SELF-WILLED and NOT AFRAID to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels which are GREATER IN POWER AND MIGHT bring not RAILING ACCUSATION AGAINST THEM BEFORE THE LORD. . . but these... speak evil of things they UNDERSTAND NOT and shall utterly perish in their own corruption? 2 Pet. 2:10-12. Paul adds his testimony to this truth by saying in Romans 13, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, FOR THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD. THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD." Whenever men speak against Satan, demons, or Babylon in railing, reviling, or flippant terms, they shout aloud their lack of understanding of Gods purpose.

How my heart rejoices in all these things. The knowledge of them completely transforms my attitude toward all men, for God has concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon ALL. Rom. 11:32. It transforms my attitude toward governments, for I see they are raised up to fulfill some design in the PURPOSE OF GOD. The fact that my puny mind does not understand the purpose means nothing at all. It changes our attitude toward principalities, powers, and dignities, and even towards Satan himself, for we can clearly see that THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD and the powers that be are ORDAINED OF GOD. Rom. 13:1. But best and greatest of all our entire attitude is changed toward God Himself, for we see His divine mind of wisdom, omniscience, and PURPOSE back of ALL THINGS. Here and here alone do our triumphant souls proclaim, "ALL THINGS ARE WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD and to them who are called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE," (Rom. 8:28) and all creation echoes and re-echoes the refrain, "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the FIRST BORN among many brethren." Rom. 8:28, 29. Oh, the depth of the riches and goodness of God! How inscrutable are His PURPOSES and His WAYS past finding out!

Let me testify again that I never really began to love or appreciate God until I began to see that Gods divine infinite PURPOSE lay hidden behind all things and that all things in the universe, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, creatures of flesh or angels of light-- all are moving by the power and wonder of the PURPOSE OF HIM who created all things according to the counsel of His will. Undoubtedly there is a day coming when every intricate detail of His fathomless purpose shall be revealed to our wondering eyes. Then and then alone shall we see the reason behind the storms that beset us. Then we shall understand the reason for pain and suffering and see what PURPOSE it had in our molding and making. Then we shall understand the PURPOSE of death and sorrow, and why it was that war darkened our horizons and

disappointment deferred our hopes and dashed our ambitions. And though we cannot understand it all now, how it lightens our load and fills our hearts with love and understanding when we know that back of it all is one great revealing truth--GODS PURPOSE.

Divine infinite purpose lies behind all things and the moment this wonderful truth dawns upon your spiritual understanding, all things begin to make sense and your love for God springs from a new foundation, even the foundation of wisdom and understanding. You may not yet understand the purpose of any of the things that have puzzled you or the reason for the doubts and fears, the pains and woes that often come upon you, but your heart rejoices that in the process of your making God is using the proper methods to make you according to His purpose.

It is completely impossible for any man to truly love God until his spirit has been taught that before all things, through all things, in all things, and after all things is God, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, filled with goodness, righteousness, love, kindness, forgiveness, and truth, that in Him and Him alone is light and in Him alone is life. He was before ALL THINGS and by HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST. There is no angel, principality, or power that does not hold his authority by direct permission and appointment of God. In Him all men and angels live and move and have their being. BY Him and FOR Him and TO Him are ALL THINGS. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends bringing glory to God forever and forever. Amen and Amen! The imagination that a thing can have its beginning in God and have its end in destruction and a flaming fire in separation from God is an imagination that comes from the mind of man and not a truth that comes from mind of God, for OF HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM are all things; to Him be glory forever and ever! Amen! Rom. 11-36. Even more enlightening is the translation from Goodspeed which says, "Who has ever known the Lords thoughts or advised Him? or who has advanced anything to Him for which he will have to be repaid?"

For FROM HIM EVERYTHING COMES: THROUGH HIM EVERYTHING EXISTS; AND IN HIM EVERYTHING ENDS. GLORY TO HIM FOREVER! AMEN." Rom. 11:34-36.

Or as Moffat's translation bluntly and beautifully words verses 34-36. "Who ever understood the thoughts of the Lord? Who has ever been His counselor? Who has first GIVEN TO HIM and has had to be REPAYED? ALL COMES FROM HIM, ALL LIVES BY HIM, and ALL ENDS IN HIM. Glory to Him forever, Amen."

The words of this beautiful passage of scripture, even if left to stand completely alone, cast a ray of eternal hope across the gloomy pages of human tradition that for centuries has confused men's minds and made their feet to stumble and lose the way and caused their faith in the omniscience, immutability, and omnipotence of the Lord to falter and die. I have positively no hesitation in saying that NO MAN on earth can truly come to love God as he ought until he sees that back of all things and before all things is a wise designing mind that is filled with AN ETERNAL PURPOSE and with that eternal purpose is omnipotent power, ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND EARTH, to carry to completion the design of His omniscient mind. If then God is both ALL WISE and ALL POWERFUL, we must conclude that He has the infinite wisdom to plan from the beginning to the end and the almighty power to carry out His purposes without let or hindrance from any source in all the universe. Nothing can stand before His wisdom and nothing can resist His power. Man in his present state of bondage and ignorance knows nothing yet as he ought to know, but love and trust must teach us that in the hands of Him who is omniscient, immutable, omnipotent, gracious, loving, and true all is planned and all is well.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN MAKING MAN

It should be abundantly evident that CREATION in all its forms must be one of the chief delights of Almighty God. The work of His creation goes millions of light years beyond the power of the mightiest telescopes ever devised by man embracing worlds and galaxies and universes unheard of and undreamed of. A galaxy is a luminous band of light encircling the heavens and consisting of numberless stars. As astronomers have swept the heavens with their mighty telescopes, they have estimated that there are enough galaxies in the

heavens that one could be given to every man and woman that was ever born. In speaking of galaxies and worlds we are only speaking of dust, but Gods principal creation consists of glorious living things. It embraces the unknown wonders of the cherubim and seraphim and heavenly hosts glorious and innumerable of which the mind of man has never dreamed. When we speak of creation, we like to dwell upon the great, the universal, and the mighty, but Gods power to create things both animate and inanimate goes not only beyond the power of the telescope but beyond the power of the microscope as well where even drops of water swarm with living things and God giveth life and breath to them all.

Time will not allow us to dwell on the glories of Gods creations, but the Creator looked upon it all and saw that it was good, and by His Holy Spirit He inspired Isaiah to write, "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, HE CREATED IT NOT IN VAIN; He formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord and there is none else." Isa. 45:18. We dare not endeavor to explore such vastness, and indeed our ability to even begin does not exist. The knowledge that must impress our minds just now is this: NONE OF THESE THINGS WAS CREATED WITHOUT A DEFINITE PURPOSE. God does not create things for a pastime. God creates all things FOR A PURPOSE. It may be now that we see no connection between many things of His creation, but eventually, when all is complete, they will fit together as the parts of an intricate machine.

Let us then bear these thoughts continually in mind as we read through the remainder of this story, for until we can see Gods PURPOSE we can see NOTHING. If Gods purpose does not stand out clearly and distinctly as the motivating factor in all He IS and DOES, then we have nothing but a HODGE PODGY of unrelated, meaningless creations with no more purpose than the shavings that fall from a whittlers jack-knife or the logs that drift meaninglessly on the tides of the ocean. By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE, whether they be THRONES or DOMINIONS, or PRINCIPALITIES, or POWERS; ALL THINGS were created BY HIM and FOR HIM. Col. 1:16.

Not the least of the creations of God is the one we will now consider, that great and wonderful creation of God which is known as MAN. Great as is the creation of the earth yet it was made to be inhabited by man. All the things put in it and on it are there for mans sake. Man therefore is the most important creature on the earth and He has been created and made as part of the plan and purpose of the ALL WISE God. None of us will fully understand that purpose now, but we do not need to UNDERSTAND IT FULLY. All we need is to know that the purpose exists. It will then be easy to align our lives, our spirits, and our souls with the mind and will of God for this present dispensation.

It seems to me that if any man should announce his intention of making or doing anything, he should also be ready with a reason for his intention. If we announce some task that will take a life-time to complete and can give no reason for undertaking such a task, then I think we would be classed among the unwise and the fools. But if any man has a purpose and a reason for devoting his life to anything, be it ever so small, we must commend his vision and devotion and class him among the wise of the earth. Now surely what would be wise in man would be wise in God also, for there is no wisdom but of God. Therefore when the ALL WISE and ALMIGHTY God makes announcement that He will create a man and put him upon the earth, we may well expect that He will also have a definite PURPOSE for doing so, and, though He is under no obligation, we may expect that He will ANNOUNCE HIS PURPOSE to His creatures that they may better know His mind and do His will. This then is what we may expect, and it is certainly what God has done for all who have a mind to see.

During my brief life I have seldom heard any man even attempt to give a reason for mans creation or a PURPOSE for his existence. If you will think back upon your past, you will also agree that, while preachers talk glibly of "heavens to gain" and "hells to shun" and the awfulness of the fall and the punishment of sin, you could count on a fingerless hand the number of times these same preachers have even tried to explain why an omniscient God would have let His creation slip beyond the power of His Almighty hand, or what was His purpose in making man in the first place. It is small wonder that this negative nonsense has caused men to drift

on seas of infidelity and wander in the deserts of agnosticism. No man on earth can have faith in that which has no purpose and it is a miracle that any man could trust such negative thought. God never intended that we should drift along without a knowledge of His will, and I say of a truth that the moment God announced His intention to make man and put him on the earth He also announced His reason and PURPOSE FOR SO DOING. These are the words spoken by the ALMIGHTY and ALL WISE God: "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS, AND LET THEM HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over all cattle, and OVER ALL THE EARTH, and over everything that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. 1:26.

This then is the first announcement of Gods intention regarding man and the first announcement of His purpose, but locked up in that glorious fiat is a universe of meaning that does not reach the eye and that the mind has never understood. When God announces that man should be IN HIS IMAGE, we try to visualize Adam as the final and finished product of Gods image, but it never enters our unenlightened minds that God was announcing His intention of taking ages and dispensations that would consume thousands of years to bring man into the image of God. And when I say MAN, I mean ALL MEN, great and small, black and white, yellow and brown, ignorant and intelligent, vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor--that they should all eventually come into His image.

Furthermore, after God had announced that He would make man in His image, He next announced that this man in His image should be given dominion over ALL THE EARTH. We are never told how long Adam lived in that wonderful garden where he enjoyed complete dominion over everything God had made, where every animal and bird and creeping thing obeyed his will, and where even plant life bowed in obedience to his godly mind, but that glorious reign of wonder and peace under the direction of a son in the image of God was but a type and a shadow of the day when a whole FIRST FRUIT COMPANY OF SONS IN GODS IMAGE would reign over all the earth and everything everywhere would be in submission to their godly minds and will. Ah! what an Eden of Gods glory it will be when the JUDGMENT IS UPON HIS SHOULDER, to order and establish it in justice and righteousness, when SAVIOURS shall come up on MOUNT ZION to judge the HOUSE OF ESAU (flesh) and the KINGDOM SHALL BE THE LORDS. Obadiah 21. Then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Heb. 2:14.

But let us not pause here. Wonderful and glorious as was that Edenic reign, we must look beyond the book of Genesis to find the full purpose God had in mind when He created man and planned to take thousands of years to bring the entire human race into Gods image. David, speaking by the Holy Spirit, asked, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Then in answer to his own question he continues: "Thou madest him to have dominion OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS: Thou hast put ALL THINGS under his feet." Psa. 8:4, 6. This then was Gods purpose in making man---that man should be in the IMAGE OF GOD and HAVE DOMINION over all the works of Gods hands. We may reverently expect then that a creature who is being groomed and prepared for such a glory and majesty must be a special object of Gods attention. We must expect that God will take both ages and dispensations to bring him through every imaginable test that he may be perfect and entire in the complete image of God.

When David, with the pen of inspiration, wrote the eighth Psalm, he must have been overwhelmed by the knowledge that Gods intentions and purposes for man go far beyond the realm of this little earth on which we dwell; therefore his inspired tongue said, "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?"

What David was really asking is the same question we are asking now. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Or as we would say, "What have you in mind for man?" I think the answer from Gods own lips is this: MAN IN GODS IMAGE, filled with Gods mind, is eventually to govern all things, for that is the purpose of sonship. Let us read a little further on this same subject as the Apostle develops the theme in the book of

Hebrews. "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, but one in a certain place testified saying, "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: THOU

HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he LEFT NOTHING that is NOT put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him." Heb. 2:5-8. We see NOT YET all things under man because MAN IS NOT YET READY. He is now in the process of coming into the image of God. He is in the process of coming into SONSHIP, and when that process is complete, he will take his place of lordship and dominion to carry the will of God into all the universe.

Though the Apostle says, "We see NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM," it is beautiful to note that in verse 9 he says, "BUT WE SEE JESUS... CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR,"--Jesus who said, "All power in heaven and earth is GIVEN UNTO ME," Jesus the first manifested Son, Jesus the Son in Gods image, Jesus the FIRST BORN OF MANY BRETHREN, Jesus who is BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, Jesus who said, "BEHOLD I AND THE CHILDREN WHICH GOD HAS GIVEN ME," Jesus who said, "The GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I have given to them." No wonder he said, "WE SEE JESUS," for "AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THE WORLD." We are on our way to His glory, not to strum harps and sit on clouds and walk golden streets shouting hallelujah, but in Gods image and likeness to take our place as lords of Gods creation, carrying His almighty will into the uttermost universe and fulfilling His MIGHTY PURPOSE. "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness and let us give him dominion."

It will be a help and a blessing to us here to read Weymouth's translation of this passage of which we have been speaking. "It was not to ANGELS that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world of which we speak, but as we know, a psalmist has exclaimed, "How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him and a SON OF MAN and yet Thou dost come to him! Thou hast made him FOR A LITTLE WHILE lower than the angels; with glory and honor Thou hast crowned him, and hast set him OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS. Thou hast put EVERYTHING IN SUBJECTION under his feet. For this SUBJECTING the universe to man implies leaving NOTHING NOT SUBJECT to him. But we do not as yet see the universe subject to him." Heb. 2:5-9. (Weymouth).

These passages stagger the imagination with their wonder. Such things are too wonderful for me. In our fallen state while yet our eyes are dim through the ravages of sin and death, we can but see through a glass darkly. Though the centuries of sins awful night have hidden His face from our eyes, yet we shall stand in the latter days upon the earth and IN OUR OWN FLESH we shall see God. Though the centuries have made us deaf to the voice of the Eternal, still His inspiration rings in our spirits. "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE." Glorious as are these great truths, they are almost terrifying in their reality. Any man who can read these things and feel proud and boastful in heart has never really seen them at all. Such a man has only heard with the carnal mind which always caters to his pride, but the holy sobering truth he has never seen. When my own soul thrills with this message, my lips seem to be sealed, for the wonder of it all is too great for me. Such merciful purpose fills me with repentance and such kindness for so poor a creature lays me in the dust of desolation. Those who see Gods purpose for man will fall in love with HIM afresh and breathe their holy adoration to His name. Gone will be self-seeking and pride, vanquished the human will. The hopes of earth for gain and glamour will vanish in the hopes and purposes of God and your will shall be one with His. "Such things are too wonderful for me; they are high; I cannot attain unto it."

THE PURPOSE OF THE FALL

As we are about to discuss the important subject of GODS PURPOSE in the FALL OF MAN, there are a few things I should like to mention in preparation. As soon as any one begins to see the design of God in a thing, he is bound to have to depart from his human ways of looking at things. When he begins to see the

infinite wonders of Gods eternal purpose, his heart immediately begins to flow with infinite love for his wonderful Lord. Earthly desires and earthly wills begin to lose their grip upon him. He will be bound to find his life and will slipping into harmony with the eternal purpose. That which is bound up in Gods heart will become bound up in his. The purpose hidden in the mind of God through dispensations to be revealed in the last days will be the joy and wisdom of his own mind. The plans and purposes of his life will be forgotten and like water vanish into the sands as he joyfully exchanges his plans for time for His purposes for eternity.

The Lord Jesus Christ brought a dreadful indictment against the Pharisees and religious leaders of His day when He said, "You make the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Matt. 15-6. This is a hateful thing indeed, but throughout all the ages of religious history it has been pitifully true. The great truths and revelations of the Spirit of God have been flung aside as heresies because they did not conform to established tradition. Jesus was always at odds with the Pharisees and doctors of the law because they rejected the counsel of God rather than cast aside their tradition. They had come to the place where it was useless to quote scripture to them, for their established ideas had become their true doctrine and mainstay. They were the people and wisdom would die with them, and all teachings conflicting with their long established creeds must of necessity be of the devil.

Now it would be folly to examine them and find them guilty, yet pass lightly over our own sad plight, for like the Jews the church in all its existing forms has established its traditions and doctrines and will rise up and cast out anyone who does not conform to them. You may quote all the scripture you wish, but few are moved by it and few have a mind to change the traditions of the past for the unfolding revelation of the days to come. Be assured therefore that every man on earth who is going to follow the revelation of God as it is revealed by His Word and by His Spirit will have to lay aside tradition after tradition and be willing to be branded as an heretic that he may walk in the glory of the light that falls from Gods presence.

Many people will be willing to follow me to this point. They rejoice in the truth that God is almighty, all wise, ever present, full of love, everlasting. They rejoice to hear that He is full of purpose and that nothing can come into the world or into existence without His divine permission. But it is right here that their established tradition comes into conflict with the truth they profess to believe. If God is omniscient, then nothing can happen without His knowledge. If God is .omnipotent (almighty), then He has all power to permit or stop anything that is not His will. If He is omnipresent (everywhere present), then He is always present to know and see even the sparrow that falls. How much more, then, did He notice the fall of Adam!

The story of the fall of man in Eden through the temptation of the devil is commonly looked upon as something that happened when God was not looking. True God walked and talked with Adam in the evening, but the idea is always foremost that, when Satan came to tempt the woman, God was not present. The fall of man is always represented as something that slipped unnoticed and unwanted into the plan of God. The pitiful story is preached of the lovely pair whom God had placed in His garden to dress it, and how Satan came and ruined the whole lovely plan. God forbid that I should stoop to cynicism, but if you know anything at all about the church's tradition, you also know that what I have stated above is the general idea that has been foisted upon the gullible ears of the people for hundreds of years. All this is enlarged upon and sermon pictures are always being painted of Gods holding a hasty conference in heaven to devise a scheme by which He could redeem the man that had fallen and the world that had fallen with him. Now do not assert that this is not so, for dozens of times in my life I have heard this stated both by pulpit and radio, and in my younger days I followed the same nonsensical tradition and stated the very same things.

To go into further detail in this regard would be a waste of time, but it is abundantly evident that any man who dares to say that the FALL OF MAN was NOT AN ACCIDENT brought about by the CUNNING WISDOM of Satan, but a DESIGNED PURPOSE of an all wise, almighty, ever-present God, will immediately find himself in conflict with the traditions of the age and will be cast out as an heretic. Notwithstanding I do affirm with every ounce of emphasis at my command that the fall of man was NOT AN ACCIDENT NOR A

CHANCE, but was part of the plan of an all wise, omnipotent, and IMMUTABLE God and that through the plan of the fall and redemption of man the whole creation would be brought into the IMAGE OF GOD, and when I say the IMAGE OF GOD I refer to the image that God had in mind when He said, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE." It is true that Adam was made in the image of God, but Adam was in the precarious position of being innocent NOT KNOWING GOOD OR EVIL. Blessed as his condition must have been, I know of no condition more dangerous than complete innocence, and, left in this condition, he could have fallen into sin at any time throughout all eternity.

God was not planning a race of weaklings when He created man. He was preparing a whole race which He would bring to sonship and to whom He would give dominion over all the works of His mighty hands. God was looking into the ages yet unborn, purposing and planning a righteous government by His sons. Time means nothing to God, for He takes endless ages in preparation for His eternal purposes.

Now let us see what the inspired apostle Paul had to say about the purpose of the fall. Let us throw away our childish tradition about the harps and mansions in the skies while we listen with bated breath to the word of inspiration as it flows from the heart of God. Read in Romans 8:20. Paul emphatically declares that the fall was NOT the plan of the creature, but the plan and hope of the CREATOR. These are his words: "For the CREATURE WAS MADE subject to vanity, NOT WILLINGLY, but BY REASON OF HIM (GOD) who hath SUBJECTED THE SAME IN HOPE." Can any statement in the world be plainer than this in which it is plainly stated that God had a plan in mind when He subjected the creature (man and the whole creation) to the vanity of the fall?

The inspired apostle does not leave us in doubt as to what that hope and purpose was, for the following verses, 21-23, clearly show that God's plan and purpose was to bring us to sonship, which he here calls ADOPTION. Notice carefully as we read it. "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION into the glorious liberty of the children (sons) of God. For the WHOLE CREATION groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only they but ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the ADOPTION, (SONSHIP) which means the redemption of our bodies." Rom. 8:20-23. Paul is still on the same theme of sonship when he continues in verse 28 with these words: "And we know that all things work TOGETHER for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. For whom He did foreknow He did predestinate to be conformed to the IMAGE OF HIS SON, that He (Jesus) might be the FIRST BORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN."

Can you not see the tremendous value of the desperate vanity and night of the fall as you read these truths? Can you not see that by the travail, darkness, pain, and temptation of this dismal night of sin God is building something into the ENTIRE CREATION that will shine and blaze in transcending splendor in the glory of the ages yet unborn? Now listen further while we read the introduction to the above passage. In Rom. 8:18, 19 Paul says, "For I reckon that the SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED, for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD." There is PURPOSE in the suffering of this present time. There is glorious unequalled design, for it is the suffering and night the world is enduring now that will bring forth unequalled and unexcelled glory, even the glory of SONSHIP in the image of God. There is definite purpose in all suffering. It is producing the very image that God desires. He cannot make the kind of sons He wants without the blazing furnaces of suffering and affliction. Do not forget this truth and do not forget that this kind of fiery trial that is to try you could not have existed without the FALL OF MAN. Oh, how much we miss by adhering to our jejune and stupid traditions which make the fall to be an accident brought about by the cunning of Satan and the inattention of the Lord.

Christians of all ages have diligently enquired, "WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?" The answer is very very simple in the light and understanding of His infinite purpose. Few subjects in scripture receive more attention than suffering an affliction and the Holy Spirit has constantly pointed out that suffering and affliction

that come as a result of the FALL OF MAN are for our eternal benefit in bringing us to perfection and sonship. Even of the blessed Christ Himself it is clearly stated, "Though HE WERE A SON YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE THROUGH THE THINGS HE SUFFERED, and BEING MADE PERFECT He became the AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION." Heb. 5:8. Listen to James as he exhorts us. "Take, my brethren, the prophets as an example of SUFFERING AFFLICTION and of PATIENCE. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the END OF THE LORD; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Jas. 5:10, II. Listen to Peter as he declares, "For as much then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, ARM YOURSELVES with the same mind:

For he that hath SUFFERED IN THE FLESH hath CEASED FROM SIN, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the WILL OF GOD." 1 Pet. 4:1, 2. And again, "But the God of all grace, who hath CALLED US UNTO ETERNAL GLORY by Jesus Christ, AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE make you PERFECT, STABLISH, STRENGTHEN and settle you." 1 Pet. 5:10. Listen to Paul again, as he declares, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment is WORKING IN US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY." 2 Cor. 4:17.

I cannot go on with the scriptures that show the vast benefits derived from suffering, affliction, sorrow, heartache, pain, deferred hopes, loss, disappointment, and the thousand other things men endure. You may study them all for yourselves. Let me assure you, however, of this: the anguish and sorrow of all these things are the furnace that refines the gold and brings us to SONSHIP AND THE IMAGE OF THE LORD. When God proclaimed, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE AND AFTER OUR LIKENESS," little did any creature know the eternal methods and fires He would use to perfect that image beyond the power of destruction. None of these things could have been accomplished without the FALL OF MAN, for without the FALL none of them would have existed at all.

When we realize that...being wise through knowledge and experience and not innocence, we would know both good and evil and could choose the good and refuse the evil. Never again will sin darken the universe, for a race of SONS OF GOD who have been redeemed and cleansed from sin shall reign in eternal righteousness.

Suffering and affliction, the results of the fall, are even carrying their eternal benefits to those who are still in the world of sin. This is clearly indicated by Peter when he says, "Whom resist in faith KNOWING THAT THE SAME AFFLICTIONS ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR BRETHERN THAT ARE IN THE WORLD." 1 Pet. 5:9. I have long believed that God saves some first and teaches them after, but others He teaches first and saves them after. But every day God reaps an enormous harvest from mankind.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN REDEMPTION

Now that we have seen that it was impossible for sin to surreptitiously slip into Gods plan and spoil His eternal purpose and that the FALL OF MAN was PART of the eternal purpose, we immediately find ourselves again at variance with established tradition. The established visible church has preached its multiplied sermons seeking to prove its tradition that the vast majority of Gods human creation will be LOST, finally, irrevocably, and eternally, and not only will they be lost to God forever and ever, but they will be given up to the most sadistic, inhuman, ungodly torments that could be devised only by the vilest fiends. According to the tradition of the church this hellish torment is to fall upon all who do not believe. It matters not a whit whether they had opportunity to believe or not. It matters not at all if they were born in the darkest jungles of Africa, the swamps of Borneo, or the deserts of India or China. The fact that they never heard there was a God will be no excuse whatever. The fact that they never heard that God had a Son will not impede their dreadful destruction. Heathen who never heard that God had a Son are, according to this teaching, faced with the same dreadful doom as men who heard the gospel from their birth and yet rejected it. To add to the stupidity of their teaching they make pitiful attempts to prove that this is the justice of God and that God is manifesting His love in the punishment of sin.

The doctrine of eternal punishment is based on a literal interpretation of some of the metaphors of scripture (to the complete neglect of many other scriptures which I shall presently show). No doctrine has ever been propounded with more confidence and greater bitterness nor with a grossness and coarseness more hideous and repugnant, and, in the face of the love and kindness of God, more inconceivable and incredible.

One of the theologians of the Church of England (Jeremy Taylor) speaks of the fate of the wicked in the following terms:

"In hell every sense and organ shall be assailed forever with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings. We are amazed at the inhumanity of Phalaris who roasted men in his brazen bull, but **THAT WAS A JOY IN COMPARISON WITH HELL.**" And here is what the renowned evangelist, C. H. Spurgeon, said on the same subject. "There is real fire in hell. Thy body shall be suffused with agony; thy head tormented with racking pains; thine eyes starting from their sockets; thine ears tortured with horrid sounds; thy pulse rattling with anguish; thy limbs crackling in the flame; every vein a pathway for the fire to tread; every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play the diabolical tune of hells unutterable lament."

Is it any wonder that in the face of such sadistic humbug there has been a wholesale manufacture of infidels? All these statements may be a show of oratorical eloquence, but they are nothing more. They hold no part of truth. They deny every attribute of God. They make wisdom foolishness, turn eternal love into exasperated hate, make omnipotence helplessness, and make the justice of God the grossest injustice in the universe. To say that I believe in such repugnance would be a lie of the first order. I do not believe it because it is contrary to the nature of God. It is contrary to the love of God. It is contrary to the word of God. It is contrary to the scriptures and it puts God in the ridiculous position of being the almighty King of kings and Lord of lords yet having in His dominion a pocket of hate and resistance that even He cannot overcome. Further than this it makes the mighty sacrifice of Christ that was made for all the world to be almost impotent in its power and scope. Worst of all it frustrates the purpose of God laid down in the beginning when He said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness and let us give him dominion."

Some will immediately ask me whether I do not believe in hell. My answer is very definite on this point. I most certainly **DO BELIEVE** in hell, but the hell of the Bible and the hell of human tradition are not the same thing at all. The hell of tradition is **PUNITIVE**, hopeless, and eternal, while the hell of the scripture like every judgment of God is corrective, remedial, and restorative. I do not understand enough of this great truth to make broad claims about it, but I do want to say that the whole doctrine of eternal punishment stands on the shaky foundation of a misunderstanding of the Greek word Aion. This word, which means age, has been translated into English in the New Testament by seven different English words. It is translated as age (twice), course (once), world (thirty-two times), eternal (twice). The adjective form of the word, aionios, appears as eternal (forty-two times), everlasting (twenty-five times) and forever (once). By translating the word **AION** which means **AGE** and has a **TIME LIMIT** by such words as eternal, everlasting, and forever, etc., it is small wonder that confusion arises as to what the true meaning really is. I do not profess to be a student of either Hebrew or Greek, but any good Greek-English New Testament or any good concordance such as Young's or Strong's will give the exact meaning of all these words. If you will take time to study this thought through, you will find as I have done that there is not one instance in the New Testament where any condemnation is final, irrevocable, or unending. In such passages as this, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," the true meaning is "Depart from me, ye cursed, into **AGE LASTING FIRE**," which is a very different thing, for it shows that the condemnation is for a period of time and is **NOT** timeless. You have often heard people speak of the **UNPARDONABLE SIN**, but, if you read it in the light I have mentioned, you will see that Jesus did not say it was unpardonable, but that it hath no forgiveness **UNTO THE AGE**. The following is from the Emphatic Diaglott. "Indeed I say to you that all sins will be forgiven the sons of men and the blasphemies with which they may revile; but whoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit has **NO FORGIVENESS TO THE AGE**, but is exposed to **AIONIAN** (age-lasting) **JUDGMENT.**" Mark 3:28, 29. The same is true in each case where the word occurs.

This truth may come as a shock to you as it did to me when I first discovered it. Indeed, you may reject it and continue on with the hopeless old traditions of unending torment, but all who cling to this pagan teaching of a Babylonish church will be hard put to it to explain the scriptures which plainly declare that God has ordained a time for the restitution of ALL THINGS. I have positively no hesitation in saying that I thoroughly believe that as surely as everything began in God, everything will also END IN GOD, for "from Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and IN HIM EVERYTHING ENDS." Rom. 11:36. (Goodspeed and Moffatt). Nothing but this could satisfy almighty power, omniscient wisdom, eternal justice, and fathomless love. Any other teaching than this makes God to be the loser of His own plan, His own purpose, and His own creation. It makes Satan to be wiser and stronger than God while the Lord almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, has to content Himself with a tiny handful that He has plucked in desperation from the devouring fire that He had not anticipated.

There is far more to coming out of Babylon than just leaving off some of their meetings. If we are going to leave Babylon we are going to have to leave those doctrines taught by her that cause men to lose sight of Gods glory and power, and spend their lives in the shallows groveling in fear and subject to bondage. The subject of this chapter is GODS PURPOSE IN REDEMPTION, and with that we intend to deal. We have dealt with the doctrine of ETERNAL PUNISHMENT only briefly, for as long as that sticks in the minds of people, they are blinded completely to the meaning of all the scriptures which speak of the complete restoration of the entire universe of God. With that obstacle out of the way, we can now deal more freely with the marvelous plans of God for the restoration of ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF.

The following scripture taken from Ephesians is one of the most ALL-EMBRACING declarations to be found anywhere in the Bible. It plainly declares that IN THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES God is going to gather ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND ALL THINGS IN EARTH INTO CHRIST. I will quote it from two or three different translators so that the full meaning may be impressed upon our minds. "Having made known unto us the MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, according to His good pleasure which He hath PURPOSED IN HIMSELF; 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." Eph. 1:9, 10. (Authorized).

The DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES is the dispensation that follows the KINGDOM. We are now in the dispensation of grace, the next is the dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the age following is the FULLNESS OF TIMES. It is the eighth day when all things are made new. It is the age when everything that came out from God will return to Him again. It is the day when every planet shall have completed its given orbit, when every sun that has set in the west will rise in the eternal day, when all the rivers that ran into the sea of humanity will return to the place from whence they came. It is the year of jubilee when all debts are canceled and all things return to their original owner, for from Him everything comes and IN HIM EVERYTHING ENDS.

We will now read the thrilling translation of Eph. 1:7-10 by Weymouth. "It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood that we have our deliverance--the forgiveness of our offences--so abundant was Gods grace, the grace which He, the possessor ALL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING LAVISHED UPON US, when He made known to us the SECRET OF HIS WILL, and this is in harmony with Gods merciful purpose for the GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE FOR IT--the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of RESTORING THE WHOLE CREATION to find its one HEAD IN CHRIST; yes, THINGS IN HEAVEN AND THINGS IN EARTH to find their ONE HEAD IN HIM." How I rejoice and how I exult in such a glorious hope of universal reconciliation! What a day it will be when the fires of God have devoured the adversary that has existed in every man, when every evil work has been burned up and every man presented purified and faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

If you have the translation of Moffatt, Goodspeed, Rotherham, and others, you will see they are all plain

and emphatic on this final restoration of all things. Well do I know that such teaching is contrary to the traditions of Babylon, but we are not interested in Babylon's traditions. We are interested in the revelation of the Lord.

Every reader should notice especially how Paul prays that God would give us all the Spirit of WISDOM AND REVELATION in the knowledge of Him, and that the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened as to what is the HOPE OF OUR CALLING. See Eph. 1:17, 18.

How often we have heard preachers warn people that "the day of grace will soon be over forever." Now nothing can be further from the truth, for as long as God exists the GRACE OF GOD will be with us. Please notice that PAUL shows that the GRACE OF GOD is going to be made known in the AGES TO COME through those who have received it here and now in this dispensation. Eph. 2:7, 8. "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, THAT

IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. "Not only does this passage tell us of the great purpose of restoration in the AGES TO COME, but it also shows us that it is for this very reason that God is saving a FIRST FRUIT COMPANY now. The displaying of the grace of God in the coming ages, i.e., the kingdom and the fullness of times, is the true reason for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. God has no intention of bringing all the world into the fold now. The whole purpose of this age is to GATHER OUT A PEOPLE TO DISPLAY HIS GRACE IN THE COMING AGES. Eph. 2:7. James also declared this truth when at Jerusalem he said, "Simon hath declared how God at first did visit the Gentiles to TAKE OUT A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME...that the residue of men might seek after the Lord and ALL THE GENTILES upon whom my name is called...Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:14, 17, 18.

The universal greatness of Gods purpose in calling out a people to display His glory in coming ages is seen in Paul's reference to PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS in Eph. 3:10. "To the intent that now unto PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES might be known BY THE CHURCH the MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD." This passage is too mighty for my feeble comment, so we shall leave it for the Holy Spirit to reveal to your heart. Surely, however, anyone can see that our calling is not merely to escape hell and spend our eternal lives in heaven, but rather that "He has saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to HIS OWN PURPOSE WHICH HE PURPOSED in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." 2 Tim. 1:8. It reaches far beyond the redemption of man to the restoration of all things in the universe. In one grand sweeping statement the apostle Paul includes everything in HEAVEN AND EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH in the great redemption and sees them all confessing TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER that Jesus Christ is Lord. Phil. 2:9-11. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things UNDER THE EARTH: and that EVERY TONGUE should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD to the glory of God the Father." Notice the universal magnitude of the statement of Col. 1:15-22. "For BY Him were all things created that are IN heaven and that are IN earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or PRINCIPALITIES or POWERS, ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM AND FOR HIM and He is before all things, and by Him ALL THINGS CONSIST... For it pleased the rather that IN Him should ALL FULLNESS DWELL, and having made peace by the BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF; by Him, I say, whether they be things IN earth or things IN heaven."

It was this same theme that Peter had IN mind when IN Acts 3:20, 21, he declared that the RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS had been spoken of by every prophet since the foundation of the world. "And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of the RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God has spoken of by the mouth of His Holy prophets since the world began." Some have tried to interpret this scripture to say that Peter meant that only the THINGS spoken

of by the prophets would be restored, but IN verse 24 he says, "All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after...have likewise foretold of these days." Weymouth adds a weight of understanding when he words it thus: "Heaven must receive Him until those times of which God has spoken from the earliest ages through the lips of HIS HOLY PROPHETS... the TIMES OF THE RECONSTITUTION OF ALL THINGS." Verses 22, 23.

It is not at all fair to the subject at hand to deal with it thus so briefly, for the truth of final and universal reconciliation actually fills the theme of Scripture. Why do we pass so lightly over the great statements of Paul with reference to the fall and redemption of man? He points out continually that, as sin with all its dire results passed upon us all because of the disobedience of ONE MAN, so righteousness passes upon us all through the righteousness of ONE MAN, Jesus Christ. Notice the convincing terms used IN Romans 5:15-21. "Adam prefigured Him who was to come, but the gift is very different from the trespass. For while the rest of men died by the trespass of one man, the grace of God and the free gift which comes by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed far more richly upon the rest of men. Nor is the free gift like the effect of one mans sin; for while the sentence ensuing on a single sin resulted IN DOOM, THE FREE GIFT ENSUING ON MANY TRESPASSES ISSUES IN ACQUITTAL. For if the trespass of one man allowed death to reign through that one man, MUCH MORE shall those who receive the overflowing grace and free gift of righteousness reign IN life through one, through Jesus Christ. When then, as one mans trespass issued IN doom for all, SO ONE MANS ACT OF REDRESS ISSUED IN ACQUITTAL AND LIFE FOR ALL.

Just as one mans disobedience made all the rest sinners, SO ONE MANS OBEDIENCE WILL MAKE ALL THE REST RIGHTEOUS. Law slipped IN to aggravate the trespass; sin increased, but grace surpassed it far, so that while sin had reigned the reign of death, grace might also reign with a righteousness that ends IN life eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Moffatt).

It should not be unnecessary to enlarge on this all-inclusive statement. Nothing could be more reasonable and just than that which Paul has explained IN the passage above--that since death passed upon ALL MEN because of Adams disobedience, so life and righteousness will eventually pass upon ALL MEN because of Christ's obedience. For as by the disobedience of ONE many were made sinners, so by the obedience of ONE shall many be made righteous. The multitudes of earth who have never heard of Adam are none the less affected by his disobedience. It is equally true that those who have not heard of Christ are affected by His righteousness. Christ is the Saviour of ALL MEN, especially of those who have the privilege of hearing and believing, for they are able to partake of the benefits of His redemption here and now.

The subject of redemption is so vast that no book can cover it, let alone the few pages at our disposal, but it should be very clear to all that, since there is a definite purpose IN the fall of man, there is every reason to hope for his universal redemption. The glorious Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) was not slain because of a possibility that man might fall, but because both the fall and the redemption were fore-ordained of God.

Let us, then, conclude this chapter by noticing a few other scriptures that include all men IN the wonderful redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For this is good and acceptable IN the sight of God our Saviour who will have ALL MEN TO BE SAVED and come to a knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:3, 4. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord, for ALL SHALL KNOW ME from the least to the greatest." Heb. 8:11. "For the grace of God that BRINGETH SALVATION hath appeared to ALL MEN." Tit. 2:11. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them heard I saying, BLESSING AND HONOR AND GLORY AND POWER BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE and to the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13.

There are always those people who object to this truth on the grounds that the preaching of universal reconciliation will make Christians and unsaved careless. People who want to be careless will always find an excuse to be careless and they will have to suffer the result of their carelessness IN the judgment. The

knowledge of Gods purpose does not make true men careless. It makes them long to become a part of His will and part of His eternal purpose. We can embrace every travail IN understanding, grace, and love, when we clearly see it is working for eternal good according to His purpose which He purposed IN Christ before the ages began.

Some have dared that if they believed that all men would eventually be saved, they would just throw up everything and have a good time. Such people might well ask themselves for what purpose they are serving God now. If they are only serving God because they live IN dread of eternal torment, then they are serving as slaves IN fear of a tyrant, but those who see God's purpose serve God because they LOVE HIM and long to partake of His glorious plan.

Geo. R. Hawtin

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