

The Great Controversy of Good versus Evil

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Matt. 6:10.

It may help us to understand more clearly our own relation to God, and what the service of God means—what religion really is—if we study the fact that the cross of Jesus Christ has to do with more than this earth. We take altogether too limited a view of God’s plan of salvation if we confine its working simply to this world of ours.

In this petition the contrast is drawn between heaven and earth, and the prayer is that the will of God may be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The fact that God’s will reigns supreme there, makes heaven what it is; and because God’s will is not done here, makes this world what it is.

The Universe Interested in the Plan of Salvation.

Let us first notice two or three scriptures which will call our attention to the thought that heaven has been affected, and is still affected, by God’s plan of salvation. Sin has affected more than this world, and more than this world depends upon God’s plan of salvation. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul says, “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 fulness 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. “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through 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.” Col. 1:19, 20.

It may seem at first thought somewhat strange that there should be anything in heaven needing to be reconciled by the

blood of His cross, but so it says. God's plan of salvation extends further than reconciling those that are on the earth. There is something to be reconciled that has to do with things in heaven.

Rebellion in Heaven.

In the Revelation John says, "And there was war in heaven." We are accustomed to the idea that this earth only has been in a state of rebellion; but this scripture says that there was war in heaven. "Michael and His angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

"Michael and His angels fought." Michael is Christ. Three very simple scriptures will show us that. "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." Jude 9. There we find that Michael is spoken of as the archangel. And in Thessalonians Paul says, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel." 1 Thess. 4:16. The Lord Himself shall descend with the voice of the archangel. But we read in John 5:25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, ... and shall come forth." Michael is the archangel; the Lord will descend with the voice of the archangel; and it is the Lord's voice that calls the dead from their tombs.

"And the dragon was cast out, that old serpent." Not in the sense that we use the expression—that old serpent himself—but

that ancient serpent, that one that caused the trouble in Eden. There was war in heaven, and the old serpent, the one that caused trouble in Eden, and is still causing trouble here, raised the rebellion, led in the fight, and was cast down to the earth.

Is there any way by which we can tell What Caused the Trouble in Heaven? I think we can tell very easily by reading the experience of Christ with Satan when He was here on this earth. "Therefore when they were gathered together Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him." Matt. 27:17, 18. It was envy on the part of Satan against Christ that caused the war in heaven in the first place, and those who are opposed to Christ will have the same disposition to-day. Speaking of the experience of those who had been converted, and of what they had been before that, Paul says, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Titus 3:3. Envy is characteristic of the natural heart, as we see from Rom. 1:29: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy." It was envy that set up the opposition to Christ when He was here in the flesh,—simply the carrying forward of that same feeling that set up the strife in heaven. What is envy?—The desire of one to occupy a higher position than he does, a feeling of great self-worthiness. Love never feels like that; "love envieth not."

The Scripture points out very clearly that it was a feeling of envy on the part of Satan that led to all the trouble in heaven. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations? For thou hast said in thine heart," notice the next five statements, and see how everyone of them begins, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above

the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Isa. 14:12-14. Ezekiel also speaks of Satan, "Thus saith the Lord God, Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee." Eze. 28:12-17. From these scriptures you will see that it was a feeling of envy on the part of Satan that led to the difficulty in heaven.

Christ was begotten, not created; Satan was created, not begotten. As the only begotten Son, Christ could enter fully into the councils of God. Because he could not do this as Christ did, envy sprang up in the heart of Satan, and he began to determine, I will exalt myself. He began to stir up rebellion, to say, God is arbitrary, and he began also to get his sympathisers. "We are in slavery, and I have a better plan of government. Choose me as leader, exalt me, and then I will exalt you." Do you not see the same principle that has been in the world ever since the fall? You exalt me and I will exalt you,— perhaps.

Satan's Disaffection.

Satan succeeded in getting enough followers to make a rebellion in heaven. Being cast out there he determined to set up his kingdom in this earth, and show to the universe that he could run a government. Gradually he would extend this government till he took away from God the dominion, and then "he would be like the Most High;" he would be God.

He started in just the same way that he started in heaven, by creating dissatisfaction. He said to the woman, "God knows that in the day you eat of the tree of knowledge, you will be as gods. The reason He gave why you should not eat of the tree, is not true. He told you that you would die, but that is not so. The fact is, that when you eat of the tree, you will be like Him. He does not want that, so He is keeping you down. If you listen to me and eat, you will be as gods." And they tried it. In doing that Adam proved false to God, and passed everything into the hands of Satan.

Adam and His Dominion.

Adam was in a special sense the son of God. "Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." Luke 3:38. He was a son of God in a different sense from what we are. The Scripture says, "Beloved now are we the sons of God." But we are the sons of God by recreation; Adam was the son of God by creation in the first place. He was set here to have dominion over this part of the universe as God's representative. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." God made Adam His premier, and placed the dominion in his hands, recognising him as His representative in this earth.

The Dominion Usurped By Fraud.

The devil, cast out of heaven by this war, comes to the earth, and by misrepresentation induces Adam, Christ's

representative, to hand over to him the dominion of this earth. He takes possession of it by lying and fraud; and determines to carry out here what he failed to do in heaven. This is recognised in the Scripture. Christ said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30 "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." 2 Cor. 4: 4. Satan refers to this fact in the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. "And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." Luke 4:4-7. He got possession of this world, and set up his kingdom, and today he says, "I am king."

On Which Side Are We?

And whose are we? and with whom are we sympathising in this government of the earth? From this standpoint, religion resolves itself into this question, Shall I be loyal to God in this great controversy that began in heaven and is now transferred to this earth, or shall I serve Satan? Whose subject shall I be in this great controversy?

Nature of the Two Kingdoms.

Satan set up his kingdom by fraud and usurpation, and he maintains it by force. Those are his characteristics. But God is love. His kingdom is founded upon love, and the only power He uses in His kingdom, is the power of love.

The charge Satan brought against God was that He was arbitrary, determined to have His own way, and did not love His people. He promised, if the angels would follow him, to set up a better kingdom. Now it remains for this pledge to work out. While God can see the end from the beginning,

created beings cannot; and had He at the first crushed out the rebellion by force; had He suppressed it by mere force, there would still have been in the minds of created beings a question of God's justice. So God lets Satan work out his plan, that all the universe may see the contrast between Satan's plan and God's plan. And This World is the Theatre on which a drama is being enacted which is commanding the attention of the universe. We are called to be actors in this drama. The question to be worked out is, Which plan of government is the better, Satan's or God's? To which one will God's created beings give their allegiance? When God sends out His servants, what is their work? "Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." Acts 26:17, 18. The question is one of loyalty to God. This may help you to see the meaning of some things which have possibly been doubtful to you.

The Case of Job.

The case of Job is a remarkable one, and has probably been in the mind of every one who has ever had the Bible in their hands. Turn with me to the first chapter of the book of Job and follow his case with this idea in view. "There came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." What right had he to be there? These sons of God were God's representatives in the different parts of the universe. Adam was a son of God, and he was put on this earth to have dominion under God over it. But he betrayed his dominion, and Satan stepped in and took his place, and so, when a council was called for the representatives of God to come together to counsel about their territory, Satan came also. The roll was called, and Earth answered, Here. But it was Satan, not Adam, who answered. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the

earth, and from walking up and down in it." "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. 5:8. The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. He went about doing good.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?"

"Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." These are the very characteristics of Satan.

Do you see, the Lord says to Satan, "My servant Job, although he is in your territory, yet he remains loyal to Me." "Oh yes," says Satan, "but that does not prove anything. Anyone would do that for the regard that you show him. It is not love that binds Job to you. He is serving you for his reward. Anybody would do it." Do you see the complaint there? "You have put a hedge round him. Unfair. He is in my dominion. I should think anybody would be loyal to you on those grounds." And that was said in a council in which there were representatives from all the universe. He there made the same charge that he made in heaven. And instead of deciding the matter there in an arbitrary way, the Lord said, "Behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand." You know how it went. One after another his possessions were taken from him, and last of all his children were slain, and he was left perfectly alone. Then he was advised to give up everything. "But in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

Satan Again Before God.

"Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present

themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them, to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him to destroy him without cause?" One would think that that would settle the controversy, but you never can settle anything with the right argument with Satan. "And Satan answered the Lord and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thy hand; but save his life."

Job's Integrity.

And you remember the experience of Job after this, how his wife urged him to curse God and die. But still he would not yield. "Though He slay me," he said, "yet will I trust in Him." "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty who hath vexed my soul; all the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you; till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me." Job 27:2-5

The Lesson.

And what did it mean? Here was a demonstration,—not simply to the few that might know of Job's case, nor to all those merely that should read of his experience, but before the whole universe,—that God's power of love was sufficient to hold a man in his integrity. Though his possessions, his children, his all was gone, yet the love that God had to him, and the love that had sprung up in his heart to God, were sufficient

to hold him, so that he said, "I will not give up my loyalty though I die." Job was working out before the universe how much power there was in the love of God.

Many times we have experiences that we do not and cannot understand. Why this affliction? why this loss? why this trouble? Do you not see that Job was before the Universe as a man that could be trusted to reveal the power of God's love to hold him firm in his confidence, demonstrating that there is a power in God's love sufficient to stand against trial?

Did you ever wonder why it was that such a man as John the Baptist should end his life as he did. A great prophet, and yet he ended his life shut up in a prison. His head was cut off and his headless trunk buried by his disciples, and "they went and told Jesus." What did that mean to Jesus?—It meant to Him and to all the on-looking universe, There is a man faithful unto death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The pages of history are covered with examples such as this. The martyrs of all ages have testified to the power of God's love. And remember that martyrs may be found in very humble homes. It is not always in the noblest palaces that the most heroic deeds are done. God and His universe look on and see these witnesses to His love, see that they are not turned away from their integrity by the sophistries and machinations of Satan, but are faithful unto death.

The Gift of Christ Gives the Lie to Satan's Charges.

In the experience of Christ Himself on this earth we have an example of the working out of God's plan of government. The charge Satan brought in the beginning was that God was arbitrary, determined to have His own way, that He did not love any one. And when Satan had turned man aside from the way of truth, and was holding him in slavery, yet "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." And by the gift of His Son God proved that there was love in

His government, and that by love He desired to have His will done. In the love He had toward His created beings He gave His only begotten Son to make it possible that His will should be done on the earth. Christ came to this earth to work out this plan, that man might be loyal to God if he chose.

Then you see that when Christ came, it was The Climax of the Controversy between Him and Satan. If Satan shall be in any way able to turn Christ, the second Adam, the representative of the human race starting out again, aside; if he can by any means overcome Him, he will triumph and establish his kingdom here. So upon Christ was brought to bear every possible temptation, and all the power of malignity that had been working in Satan for thousands of years. And to effect his purpose he followed Christ every step of the way from the manger to the cross. He was determined that Christ should not remain loyal to God while in his dominion. When it came to the cross of Christ's experience, Satan instigated on the part of man everything that his malignity could devise. He urged them on to overcome His human nature, that he might make Him swerve from the path of loyalty. He tried to bribe him. "Acknowledge my right to the kingdom of the earth," he said, "and I will give you all these kingdoms." But this Christ could not do; for it was the very point of the controversy.

We come to the climax of the struggle in the death of Christ. Satan's charge had been that God's government was arbitrary and hard, and that he would give his subjects a better government. The universe looked on to see it worked out. The curse of disobedience rested on the earth, but Christ came to redeem it, "being made a curse for us." Satan had urged on the Jews till they took His life, and thus Satan became the murderer of the Son of God. By His gift to the world God showed that He did desire His will—the law of love and filial obedience—to be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and in order to make it possible He was willing to give His only begotten Son to die. Satan showed that he wanted his own way badly enough that he was willing to become the murderer of the Son of God. All this was enacted before the universe, and how

did it effect it?

God's Government Vindicated Before the Universe.

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast; the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified... Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:20-32. And Jesus Christ, lifted up between heaven and earth on the cross, did draw both heaven and earth to Him. Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. It is not often a king gains his kingdom by dying, but Jesus Christ won both His kingdom and His subjects by dying, and He destroyed His enemy by death.

The Cross Sealed Satan's Fate.

"Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." When He was lifted up on the cross, and when He said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost, all heaven heard; and wherever throughout the universe there had still been in minds thoughts of rebellion and lingering sympathy for Satan, that scene on the cross showed them that Satan's government meant that nothing should stand in his way, and that to effect his purpose he was even ready to murder the Son of God. Thus they were drawn to God by His great love. Then the fate of Satan was sealed; he was cast out, and it was demonstrated that God is love, that He was governing by the power of love.

Concluding Thoughts.

And think you that if Satan would not hesitate to take the life of the Son of God that he will hesitate to take your

life? Think you that his plan of government is any better now? Do you not see that it is loyalty to God or to Satan? Do you not see that we have either to put ourselves under Satan's leadership and fight against Christ, or to put ourselves under the leadership of Christ to fight against Satan? Which side are you on? Which side are you choosing to-night? "Ye are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men." Who has your name enrolled in his book. Are you enrolled as fighting under the blood-stained banner of the Lamb, as a loyal subject of God; or as fighting under the black banner of Satan, against the government of God?

ghting under the black banner of Satan, against the government of God? This question of the two kingdoms is going on till Christ shall come the second time to take His kingdom. We are very near that time now. All one has to do is to read the Scripture and the signs of the times to know that it is near. Little argument is needed to show any one who will read the Scripture and the signs of the times that the day of the Lord's coming is near and hasteth greatly. The controversy is in its height. Tremendous power is being brought to bear to hold subjects in the kingdom of Satan. He is bringing upon people every devise to hold them in the bonds of sin; to take their minds away from the realisation of the near coming of Christ, and fill them with pleasure and self-seeking. But Christ is at work in the earth, and is to-day selecting those who will be loyal to Him. And what does it mean to be loyal to Him?—It means to Obey the Laws of the Realm.

Christ has proclaimed the conditions of membership into His kingdom. He has sent His servants throughout the world, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28:19, 20. To-day they are preaching that the coming of His kingdom is near; and they are gathering out those who will be loyal to God.

It costs something to be loyal to God now. It cost Job something; but there is a power in the love of Jesus Christ to

hold; there is something in His love that will satisfy every longing soul, and fill with fatness all who will come to Him. The call is now, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

The two kingdoms cannot be joined together. And yet there has seemed to be a tendency to try to make them run together. You cannot do it. They are perfectly opposed to each other; light and darkness will not mix. Love and hate are opposite characteristics, and will not co-mingle. At the crucifixion the cross of Jesus Christ made a separation between the repentant and the unrepentant, and to-day it makes the same division. And God is now sending forth A Special Message for loyalty to His law. He calls upon every one now who will, to yield himself to obey the laws of His realm; and more than that, He has set up in this last generation a wonderful sign of loyalty. There is a special call to that portion of His law which has been set aside. "Hallow My Sabbaths." "They shall be a sign between Me and you that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." Eze. 20:20. In this generation the Lord has set up His Sabbath as a special sign that He created the heavens and the earth through Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." John 1:1-3.

The Sabbath is set up as a special sign of loyalty to God, of obedience to His laws, and of our belief in the creating power and the divinity of Jesus Christ our Lord. Shall we choose Him as our Lord, and step from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light? He is coming soon, and when He comes, He whose right it is to reign will reign. He has redeemed the earth, and He will save when He comes every one who has been obedient to His laws and has identified himself with Christ as leader.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a

flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations and He shall rule them with a rod of iron and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Rev. 19:11-16. Is He our King and our Lord? Those who recognise Him now as King of kings and Lord of lords, will be prepared, when He is revealed, to say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9.

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