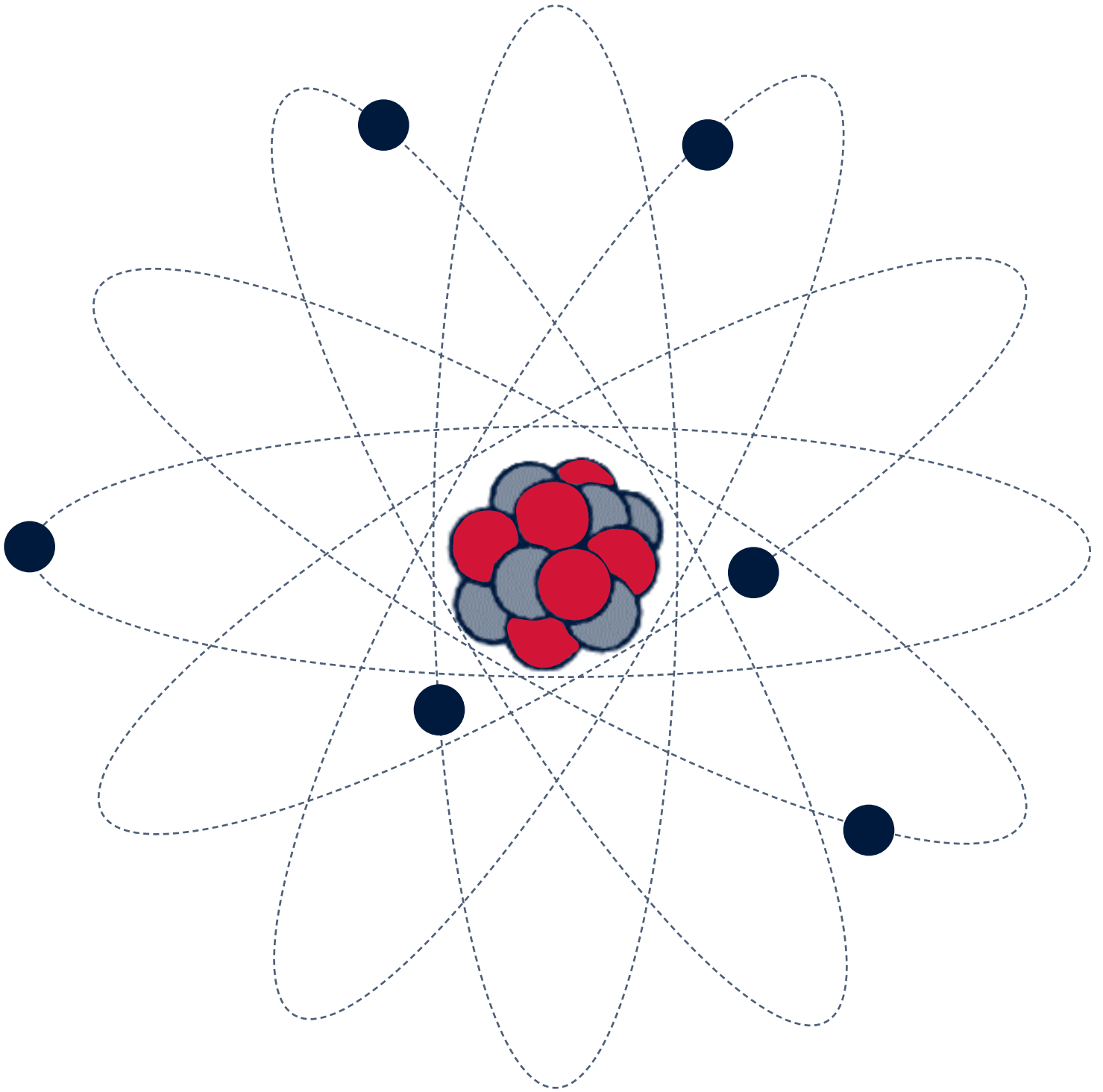


The Bible Standard



HEAVEN ON EARTH

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

— Luke 11: 13 (New International Version) —

THE STORYTELLER has always been highly prized in society. In early, pre-writing cultures, history and tradition were passed on by the official storyteller, who could relate from memory, for hours and days on end, those things necessary for each generation to know. From such stories legends were woven. The practice of writing was not a commonplace thing until the advent of universal, compulsory education introduced that skill to the masses.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Jesus addressed His hearers on many occasions in parables. This picturesque communication employed the language of everyday life to reveal truths. The Aramaic language, which Jesus would have spoken in addition to Hebrew, is known for the richness of its imagery, and would have been readily understood by the general population, to whom Jesus addressed Himself. The power of the picture (“worth a thousand words”) is a principle widely accepted in our modern world. Cinema films and visual aids in the educational field take advantage of the fact that the human mind absorbs information more readily (and memorably) when it is *shown* and not merely *said*.

Our Lord’s parable-stories were verbal pictures, dramas in words. They would surely have captivated and delighted His hearers, judging by their longevity, having come down to our own times. A couple of generations ago, most people in Christian countries would have been quite familiar with the language of the parables. “To kill the fatted calf,” and the “Good Samaritan,” are expressions that would have been recognized as originating in Scripture in a society for whom an elementary understanding of the Bible was considered an essential of a proper preparation for civilian life.

Other Biblical expressions, apart from the parabolic, formed ordinary parts of speech for many: “hiding one’s light under a bushel,” “the blind leading the blind,” “do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” were used without embarrassment.

The way in which our modern world is structured is quite different from that of Jesus’ day. Many of His parables were

rooted in agriculture, an occupation shared by most of His auditors. These, the “common” people, largely uneducated, were without the airs and graces of the scholarly class, who rejected our Lord and His message and deprecated His teachings. Our Lord, an uncommon Man, could communicate with common people. He did this by means of the Parable. And the common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12: 37).

Heaven in the Looking Glass

This world is in a general way a reflection of heaven. God’s revelation of Himself in His Word makes sense because it is presented in terms which are familiar to us. Its overall design is intended by God to display how He works that He might the more easily and effectively communicate with His creation.

There is a “natural” religion, which has manifested itself in all cultures from time immemorial. A corruption of the original understanding of the Divine Creator, this belief in a Supreme Being had many manifestations, more often than not distorted by legends and in myths, culminating in wildly differing accounts of the Creation story and perverted perceptions of the character of God.

The Apostle Paul in Rom. 1: 16-32 allows that this natural revelation was sufficient to alert the conscience of even the most pagan. But nature itself, having fallen prey to the curse which came on the human family cannot now fairly represent its own Maker, nor His character and personality. Its very existence was (and is) sufficient to establish the *fact* of a Creator and thereby provide a sense of responsibility to the thoughtful, but it could not predict the future nor convey the beauty of God’s character.

In the late 19th century, when “natural theology” was at its most popular — a reaction against the teachings of evolution, just then gaining acceptance and destroying the faith of many — prominent Christian writers produced brilliant attempts at drawing out a natural revelation, arguing that nature did, indeed, prove God to be what the Bible says He is.

Two well-known books in this field were *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, by Henry Drummond (author of the

“Lift up a standard for the people” — Isa. 62: 10

Contents February 2003

Heaven on Earth 14

There is a co-relation between the heavenly and the earthly. God has revealed His will and ways to man using man’s own language, in order that he might understand what He has to impart.

God of the Atom 17

God is more than a stupendously powerful Creator of the remarkable world around us. He has a heart of compassion for fallen mankind and has moved “heaven and earth” to bring salvation to them.

Bible Question Box 21

- Prodigal Son
 - Son of Man
- Publications 23
Announcements Back Page

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wide-selling treatise on Love, *The Greatest Thing in the World*), and Bishop Butler's *Analogy*. Reasoning back from, for example, mankind's noblest qualities (compassion, generosity), these writers and others contended that such demonstrations of virtue would be impossible were it not that the Creator was Himself virtuous and good, and that He had implanted these qualities in His creation.

Arguments such as these have fallen out of favor, largely as a result of a wholesale shift in the sciences to the doctrine of evolution, which has placed Chance on the Creator's throne and fashioned creation after it, concluding that the world is a product of blind biological and chemical processes and is no more and no less than an expression of these forces.

The failure of natural theology to offset the onslaught of evolution was not due to any inherent weakness in its logic. Rather, the handmaiden of natural theology, *revealed religion*, in the way it was presented at the time, failed to adequately explain the condition and future state of the race, consigning teeming masses of mankind to a burning abyss of suffering, and failing to explain that the present world was imperfect, *and did not represent the character and competence of God Himself*. The infidelity of today is a result of the onslaught of God-less teachings and lack of conviction in the Christian community at large.

THE NECESSITY OF A WRITTEN REVELATION

It would be impossible to understand the Divine mind had we no "blueprint" to follow. The Revelation would be no revelation at all were it not consistent with our understanding of the world in which we live. A good teacher drives home his or her lessons by illustration and example. God taught us love for humanity not merely by telling us about it, but by sending His Son into the world, to die for man (John 3: 16):

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus Himself draws on the paternal symbology in the text quoted at the head of this article (Luke 11: 13, *NIV*):

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Jesus by His words transmitted a message of consolation and assurance to those — His disciples — who as yet dimly grasped their new role as God's *children*. Raised on the teachings of Mosaic Law, they would not have thought of Jehovah (Whose Name was, for the Jew, not to be spoken) as their *Abba*, Father. But they were also fathers and mothers and sons and daughters, and they understood these relationships. So Jesus used their language, and the imagery with which they were familiar. Here He tells them of the efficacy of prayer — that they were entitled to pray to God Himself as His *children* and ask favors of Him! Amazing!

God is Divine, immortal, proof against death, so He could not Himself die on the cross to redeem mankind. Had He intended to redeem mankind in some other way than He

did, no doubt He would have arranged His plan and this world differently. But He did not.

God in Christ

Jesus is the closest approximation to the Heavenly Father as it is possible to be. Jesus was, in this sense, God "manifest in the flesh," and those who saw Jesus looked, as it were, full into the face of God (1 Tim. 3: 16; John 14: 8, 9).

Jesus was no ordinary man. Untainted by the Adamic curse, righteous and pure, He spoke the words of God as the *Logos* of God. He had the complete trust and confidence of His Father, and could expound the words of God with full authority (Matt. 7: 28, 29). Set forth by Jehovah God above all creatures, angelic or earthly, it was proper to give Him — and for Him to receive — worship (Heb. 1: 6; Phil. 2: 9-11). Not even the mighty angels had this privilege (Rev. 22: 8, 9).

Jesus was first and foremost the Son of God, but He also styled Himself the Son of Man (John 5: 25, 27; see *Bible Question Box* in this issue). He was also the Son of Mary. We know few details of Mary, but we have some idea of her compassion as a naturally thoughtful mother and an introspective individual (Luke 1: 26, 30; 2: 18, 19, 34, 35). The complimentary references to her indicate the quality of this woman *whom God Himself selected* to give birth to His Son.

In the dismissive attitude of His brethren in later years, and in the complaining, peevish behavior of His disciples, Jesus saw humanity in its wildly imperfect state and came to understand at first-hand the consequences of sin, though He Himself was unsullied by it. The Scriptures testify that He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. From this we know that He was capable of development of character — another line of reasoning which argues against His being God (Heb. 2: 10, 16-18; 5: 8 [Even those who believe that Jesus was a Divine personage of the Trinity accept that the only way we can fathom such texts is to assume that Jesus was 100 percent man, though they erroneously believe He was at the same time 100 percent God.]).

PARABLES COMMENTARIES ON LIFE

From the complex web of emotions and the tapestry of human experience Jesus wove His stories, His parables, enchanting His hearers and communicating to them the deep truths of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the mark of an expert speaker — He had compassion for His hearers and He loved them so deeply that He taught them, not merely as a duty, but as One who wished them to grasp the same joy that He had.

In the parables and allegories Jesus drew on various aspects of real life:

- Agriculture (Matt. 13: 1-18)
- Economy (Matt. 25: 14-30)
- Law (Luke 18: 1-8)
- Marriage (Matt. 25: 1-13)
- Family (Luke 15: 11-32)
- Farming (Luke 15: 3-7)
- Trade (Matt. 20: 1-16)
- Warfare (Luke 14: 31, 33)

God has given us an understanding of creation. The power of procreation given to the animals and to man is taken for granted. In the book of Genesis the sea and land animals and organisms were made to multiply. The first human pair, Adam and Eve, were given a mandate to multiply and fill the earth, but there the similarity with the animal kingdom ends. Only man was created in God's likeness and image, another clue that we should expect to find similarities between heaven and earth (Gen. 1: 25-28).

The murder of Abel by Cain evoked a punishment precisely because higher things were expected of him. The animal kingdom, with its chase and predation, does not come under God's condemnation, for it is not a kingdom built on morality — it is not in itself intended to be a reflection of Heaven. Rather, it came under the stewardship of man, a stewardship which, sadly, man relinquished millennia ago. It is, however, encouraging to note that even this element is addressed in God's Word. From the injunction to treat working cattle humanely, to the extraordinary prophecy that peace in the animal world will one day be a reality, this part of creation is brought into the same picture (Isa. 65: 25).

Man and His Maker

Mankind understands the principle of creation, but not in the sense in which the Scriptures use it. No, most people have rejected the notion of a Master Creator. But civil engineers, architects, builders, scientists — all understand what can be done with the right material and the right design to meet a stated purpose.

It is odd that this principle of planning and development is so little regarded in their view of the natural world. The most brilliantly designed structure would be impossible without a law of gravity. We may think of this planet as a giant laboratory — it is a "hands-on" experience for all of us. Mankind, collectively and individually, have been given wonderful, flexible tools with which to work, manufacture, create. The backyard gardener working the wonderfully versatile soil, and the nuclear physicist exploring the high realms of science have more than enough in this world to satisfy their curiosity and their desire to adjust, supplement, and fabricate. And yet, there is more to it than that. Our enjoyment of this world and our lives in it is marred by the distress and destruction that goes on around us. This will change eventually — we hope sooner rather than later.

The time will come when Heaven will come down. For many, who are now well-fed and well-housed and have their interesting lives before them, this world can seem like a paradise. But from God's viewpoint it is not. And the closer we get to God's viewpoint and see through His eyes, as it were, the more deeply we recognize the horrible state which mankind is in. Heaven must come down, because we cannot go up to it. Nor was mankind intended to do that. Mankind, like Adam, is of the earth, earthly. Rather than prepare us for a world in which we have never lived and can never understand, God is preparing us to live in this one, but a perfect version of it, and *forever!*

Only a relative few, the Very Elect — also styled the Little Flock (Luke 12: 32) — were called with a heavenly calling. Without spiritual-mindedness, humankind in heaven would be like fishes out of water. Not all men can have faith, so not all are selected and tested on such points. God has appointed a day in which this will be done (Acts 17: 31).

HEAVEN COME DOWN

We read in Revelation that the New Jerusalem will descend. This denotes God's habitation with man, in a way more glorious than when He dwelt with Israel in the Tabernacle and the Temple. We see only a glimpse of Heaven even now. While God will always reserve to Himself the secrets of Heaven, He has been pleased to open some of His truths to our view — at least as much as we are capable of understanding. On one occasion, Jesus told His disciples that He had many things to say unto them "but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16: 12, 13) — holding out the promise of a later understanding. Our comprehension of Truth is progressive, and often goes hand-in-hand with life's experiences, in addition to our reading and study of the Bible.

Were God to speak to us in the abstract without reference to our workaday world, we could not understand. He made us and knows how we best learn. The test in the Garden of Eden was literal and the drama there enacted easily conveyed to later generations, though today the incident is portrayed by many as trivial or a myth.

In Matthew 6: 9-13 is found the prayer that has been prayed for generations and known instinctively by all church-goers.

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, for ever.
Amen.

We are told little in the Scriptures about this heaven on earth, but in broad terms we know it will be as Eden was at the very beginning. We have little information about that Eden, either, but it was not intended by God that the paradise should have remained the province of Adam and Eve only. God created the world to be inhabited (Gen. 1: 22; 9: 7; Isa. 45: 18). This text also tells us that our planet has permanence. Even in cosmic terms, that means forever, in the most literal sense of that word.

* * *

GOD OF THE ATOM

“Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth”

— Revelation 19: 6 —

THE ENGLISH WORD *omnipotent* is used only once in the King James Version of the Bible, in the text quoted at the head of this article. The word so translated here is the Greek word *pantokrator*, which conveys the thought of “the all-ruling,” and denotes the limitless power and authority of Almighty God. The same Greek word is found in Rev. 11: 17:

We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

The *New International Version* renders this last phrase “begun to reign,” positioning the speakers (the 24 elders (v. 16)) after the start of God’s Kingdom on earth, an event which has not yet taken place. (See the previous article in this issue.)

Because only Jehovah God is omnipotent, the quality must be defined based on what the Scriptures tell us about Him. That is to say, God Himself does not need to fit the definition, but we draw from our understanding of Him what this attribute implies. Of necessity, God is without beginning and without end, which is why the Scriptures associate this fact with His almightiness (Rev. 4: 8).

God can do anything He wills to do, as we read in the following texts:

Job 23: 13 — “But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.”

Psa. 115: 3 — “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”

Psa. 135: 6 — “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.”

AN ALL-POWERFUL CREATOR

In our present-day world, power is much prized, though feared. Two measures of power by which countries are rated are economic and military. As a general rule, the chief nation of any era possesses one or (usually) both of these attributes, and through these exercises its influence to shape the world in the way it sees will be to its advantage.

Ascendant power is a prize for any nation, though it often proves to be an unsustainable burden, and empires have come and gone under the resultant weight. During the post-Second World War period, the staring match between the Soviet bloc and the West was dangerous because of the possibility of nuclear war. Power was measured in kilotons

and the range of warheads — the power to obliterate entire communities in an instant being the root of the fear and, in an odd way, a guarantee that sensible rulers could not initiate such a monstrous outcome. The prospect of mutual assured destruction (MAD) was too awful to contemplate.

At the root of this aspect of man’s power lay an element created by God’s power. Not that He is to be blamed for man’s sinful tendencies. The Scriptures tell us that God created man perfect but that he devised schemes contrary to God’s will (and injurious to himself). God is not to blame for mankind’s exercise of his free will (Eccles. 7: 29). Man frequently abuses the knowledge because of his quest for domination over others. The power of the atom is no exception. Man sought for centuries to understand this force (see box on page 20) and today nations live in fear of its possibilities. We now face the anxieties of nuclear terrorism and the necessity of safeguarding society from attack with elaborate and expensive anti-missile shields.

The power of the tiny atom is awesome and gives us some idea of the raw power of the Creator. Jesus performed His miracles with the “finger” of God (Luke 11: 20). The power which God holds in reserve we can only guess at. As Christians we may take consolation from this: He will never permit mankind to destroy itself, but will restrain its excesses, and will deliver His own (Psa. 76: 10; Matt. 24: 21, 22).

GOD NOT MERELY OMNIPOTENT

To acknowledge that God is all-powerful is not, of course, to understand Him. Were omnipotence the chief characteristic of our Creator we would have reason to fear always. Nor is He impersonal. His end in view is always the welfare and blessing of His creation. The Scriptures tell us how God directs His power:

Isa. 45: 21-23: Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Compare Phil. 2: 5-11

Note: All Scripture texts are from the King James Version, unless indicated otherwise.

God has directed His rich resources

to creation and to filling this

earth with all the wonderful

things we enjoy. And the same

almighty power is directed

to a greater end: Salvation,

individually and collectively.

Isa. 46: 5-10: To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

There is always a purpose behind God's use of power, and it is always benign. This fact enhances His almightiness and guarantees that we, His creation — who are, so to speak, always at His mercy — need not be afraid of Him. His integrity is impeccable:

Deut. 32: 4: He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Psa. 89: 11-17: The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the

day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

We see from these texts that the qualities adjunct to the exercise of God's power are:

1. Virtue
2. Purpose

God's power is restrained only by His righteous self-control. We might say that this is the power to use power only as needed. Sometimes His power is shown not only in what He does, but also in what He refrains from doing:

Psa. 94: 3-11: Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?

Rev. 6: 9, 10: And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Hab. 1: 13: Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

Eccles. 8: 11: Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Psa. 50: 16-23: But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove

thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

God has directed His rich resources to creation and to filling this earth with all the wonderful things we enjoy. And the same almighty power is directed to a greater end: Salvation, individually and collectively:

1 Tim. 2: 1-6: I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Heb. 7: 25: Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

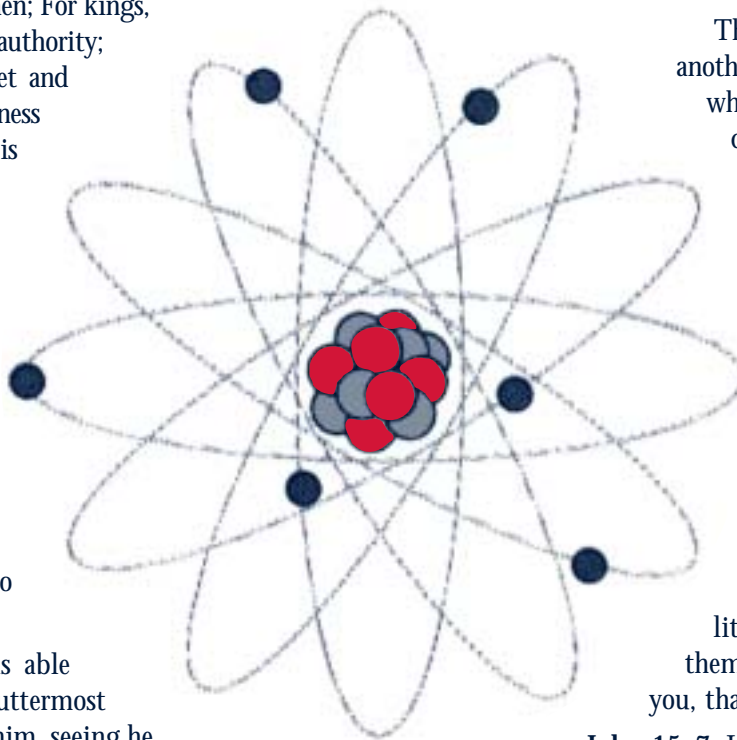
Matt. 28: 16-18:

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

God uses His power to protect His children:

Rom. 8: 31-39: What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh

intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.



This shows God's providence, another aspect of His almighty power, whereby He determines the circumstances necessary to accomplish His good pleasure. He makes the resources of His power available to us through the medium of prayer:

Phil. 4: 13, 19: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. . . . But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

1 John 4: 4: Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

John 15: 7: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 16: 33: These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

The Christian learns — through the Spirit, Word, and Providences of God — to pray for the necessary and good things. We learn to exercise discernment and self-control, modelling ourselves after the Heavenly Father and His Son. Praise be to God for the wise and loving use of His power! We rejoice that the God of the Atom is the God of Salvation.

* * *

THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIRECT EVIDENCE

It requires faith to perceive and understand the things of God. At the very root, it is believing that God is — that He exists. Even this rudimentary step is difficult for many — if not most — today. Drawing a lesson from history, we note that the nature of matter was a mystery for centuries. For thousands of years philosophers have speculated on the existence of the atom. With the increase of technology and scientific methods it became possible to analyze the atom.

The atom being unseen meant that its existence was, on good grounds, *inferred* — in short, it was *an article of faith*. The existence of the particle was based on an assumption that eventually proved largely correct. Oddly, this principle is for some reason disallowed for the Christian, whose faith is based not on the concrete, but is of the indirect kind, in its own way just as valid as scientific assumption. In the past 200 years or so, the search for the scientific truth was narrowed. Some of the notables in this field:

John Dalton, England (1766-1844) — Dalton, a chemist, conducted much of his work in Manchester, making valuable contributions to the understanding of atoms. He has given his name to the condition of color-blindness, *Daltonism*. His most famous work was *A New System of Chemical Philosophy* (Part I). He relied on his observations and mathematical reasoning to produce this revolutionary work. He was obliged to defend his theory against critics, and followed up his treatise with a second volume, providing more evidence for his propositions. This Quaker, who believed in simple living, was buried in lavish fashion. So enamored was the population in Britain with the fame of their chemist that when he died in 1844, Manchester buried him like a king. His body lay in state and was viewed by over 400,000. A statue to his memory still stands in the city.

Ernest Rutherford, New Zealand (1871-1937) — Rutherford's contribution to atomic theory, and especially his discovery of the nucleus, had a profound influence on the modern world. At Manchester University, in 1913, working with **H. G. Moseley**, he used cathode rays to bombard atoms of various elements, revealing their internal structure. Each element could then be assigned an atomic number and the properties of each element could be defined by this number. (Another of his associates during this period was **Hans Geiger**, who gave his name to the detector.) Moving later to Cavendish Laboratory, he influenced numerous future Nobel Prize winners. It was here, in 1919, that he fired his alpha particle "bullets" at nitrogen atoms and became the first to "split the atom" artificially. **C.D. Ellis**, his co-author, stated that "the majority of the experiments at the Cavendish were really started by Rutherford's direct or indirect suggestion." This father of nuclear physics remained active to the end of his life.

Niels Henrik David Bohr, Denmark (1885-1962) — The son of an eminent physiologist and an educator mother, Bohr entered Copenhagen University, and while a student there, in response to a challenge, took up experimental and theoretical investigation of the surface tension by means of oscillating fluid jets. His explanation of the properties of metals (based on electron theory) remains a classic. He worked with Rutherford in his investigations into the radioactive phenomena, and was a voluminous writer. When the Germans invaded Denmark in the Second World War he fled to Sweden and spent the last two years of the war in England and America, where he became associated with the Atomic Energy Project, later devoting his efforts to the peaceful application of the atom.

* * *

The Scriptures tell us that time will come when the evidence now based on faith will be made plain to all (Isa. 35: 5; 60: 2). We look forward to that day.

of interest . . .

A power company in Australia intends to build the world's tallest free-standing structure. At 3,300 feet (1,000m), the solar tower would be more than twice the size of the world's current tallest, the Canadian National Tower in Toronto. The structure is to be erected in the middle of the outback, in the remote Buronga district in New South Wales. Backed by the Australian Government, the project is part of a global campaign to foster the use of renewable energy. The tower could collect enough energy to provide electricity for 200,000 homes, and save more than 700,000 tons of greenhouse gases which might otherwise be liberated into the atmosphere from coal- or oil-fired power stations.

The proposed tower is of German design and sits under a huge glass roof spanning 4.3 miles (7km). The sun's rays heat the air under the glass roof, creating an updraft, allowing air to be sucked through 32 turbines. The turbines will generate power around the clock. To warn aircraft, high intensity lights will be fitted to the top of the structure. The project is expected to be complete by 2006.

— *The British Broadcasting Corporation*



Q What is the meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32)?

A The setting of this parable shows our Lord's object in giving it. In Luke 15: 1, 2 we read that publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him, "and the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." In the parable, Jesus points out that the Pharisees' attitude toward publicans and sinners was wrong and could cost them their own share in the Kingdom.

As to the interpretation, the *father* represents God, and the two sons represent the two general groups into which the Jewish nation divided itself (v. 11): (1) the *elder son*, picturing those who remained loyal to God in their outward profession, at least, and in their endeavors outwardly to keep His law, such as the Scribes and Pharisees; and, (2) the *younger son*, representing the common people who generally were not so religiously strict. These misused their privileges and opportunities as members of the nation of Israel and beneficiaries of the Divine promises. Instead, merely living for the day, they gratified their own desires, and because they did not attempt to live godly lives were the denigrated *publicans and sinners* (vs. 12-16).

The younger son portrays such reprobates recognizing their degradation, feeling remorse, and longing to be back in harmony with God — once again in the Father's house, (vs. 17-19). Of Jesus it was prophesied: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isa. 42: 3; Matt. 12: 20). He invited and encouraged such burdened ones, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28). He reminded them that God does not despise a broken and contrite heart (Psa. 34: 18; 51: 17).

The Prodigal Forgiven

Now comes a beautiful verse showing that while the younger son was yet some distance off, the father saw him and, feeling compassion for his son, ran to him and embraced and kissed him. Here we see the willingness of the Heavenly Father advancing toward the penitent ones, ready to forgive them (v. 20).

However, the younger son was not only forgiven, but because of his repentance he was granted special manifesta-

tions of his father's favor — the best robe, the ring, the shoes, and the fatted calf to be killed and the feast to follow. As to the particular application of the parable, the time setting for the Father's acceptance of the prodigal, kissing him, and putting the robe upon him, was at Pentecost. The kiss represents the seal of God's love; the best robe pictures the robe of Christ's righteousness; the ring suggests the witness of the spirit; the sandals describe consecration, especially the grace of patience which is needed by the Lord's people as their preparation for the sharp contact that they experience in their relations with the world; and the fatted calf killed and the feast following, portrays the rejoicing in the Gospel Age promises of God, which apply to those covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness and accepted into God's family by the begetting of the holy spirit (vs. 22-24).

The elder son's anger and refusal to enter into the spirit of the feast pictures the Scribes, Pharisees, and others of their class being angry with the Father. They resented His goodness in offering both them and the returning prodigal alike the privilege of entering into the blessings and favors of the Gospel. This accounts for their hatred of our Lord and His message, which was attracting the wayward wanderers back into fellowship with God (v. 28).

The Principles Apply Broadly

While the foregoing presents a brief interpretation of this parable as it applied at about the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the principles set forth in it have a general application. For instance, there has been a general class of people all down through the Gospel Age who have manifested the characteristics of the elder son. Naturally more noble by birth, they have been raised in a relatively good environment, and generally seek to do right.

There have also been many whose lives corresponded to the experiences of the younger son — those from the lower strata of society, not of noble birth and lacking environmental privileges.

At first sight, one might expect that the ones to be chosen by God to share in His Kingdom for the purpose of blessing the world of mankind in the Millennial Age would be of the former class, yet the very qualities that seem to give them an advantage — education, wealth, and good

morals — are the things that have made them less ready to accept God's terms. Not that God has been unwilling to have them in His Kingdom, but He has declared in His Word that not many great, not many noble, not many learned, not many wise, are chosen, but that chiefly the despised ones of this world, those that are rich in faith — these are the ones would make up His Kingdom (1 Cor. 1: 26-29). God desires as His people those who recognize their own imperfections and are honest enough to acknowledge their unworthiness of His favors, yet humbly seek His mercy. Such He blesses with a knowledge of the contrast between their fallen condition and His righteousness. This describes those similar to the younger son.

The self-satisfied, on the other hand, are unwilling to accept the grace of God in Christ or to confess their need of any covering for their sins. They are not humble enough to be of the class that the Lord has been seeking during the Gospel Age. These are similar in character to the elder son, though even they will have an opportunity in due time, in God's Kingdom, for during that time provision will be made whereby even those with the hardest of hearts will be softened (Ezek. 11: 19; 36: 26).

A Most Comforting Parable

Perhaps no other parable has been so helpful to the poor and needy, the sinful and the weak, those who have a desire to return from the ways of sin and to be received back into the family of God. They see themselves in this parable, and are encouraged by its portraying the Heavenly Father as willing to receive them. How contrary this thought is to that in the creeds of the Dark Ages, picturing the Heavenly Father as merciless and vengeful.

How many, even of God's children, have gone astray and wasted their time and energies on the weak and sordid elements of the world, on vanities, living on "husks," worthless trifles — only to reap disappointment! How many fail to come to their senses and to think soberly until they are brought low in trouble, until the loving and all-wise Heavenly Father allows them to have some disaster come into their lives! How comforting it is to know that when we recognize our mistakes and failures, great or small, and turn back to our Heavenly Father in repentance, He is quick and glad to forgive us and to give us a new start — He meets us more than half-way.

Heb. 7: 25 states: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." We are grateful for the understanding that God in His love has made an arrangement, through the Ransom sacrifice of Christ, that any and all who have a repentant heart may come to Him, or return to Him.

Q One of Jesus' titles is "son of man." What does this title mean?

A Our Lord used the title "son of man" when referring to Himself (Matt. 13: 41; 25: 31). The Greek text reveals that when Jesus used this expression it was in the emphatic form, "*the son of the man*" (see *Emphatic Diaglott* translation). The *son* in this instance is Jesus and the *man* is Adam.

The title refers to our Lord as the pre-eminent one of Adam's descendants — Adam being the Divinely appointed head and original father and life-giver of the human race (Psa. 8: 4-8). Adam, however, failed to give his posterity lasting life due to his disobedience. The Jews understood this title as synonymous with *Messiah*.

But one might ask, How can Jesus be referred to as a *descendant* of Adam, for the Scriptures point out that He was the Son of God — that He received His human life not originally from Adam, but directly from God by a miracle (Luke 1: 30-35)?

We answer, it is true that the relationship which Jesus had with the human race was not through Adam. Had He been a *biological* descendant of Adam, He would have been a sinner. His thus being imperfect would have disqualified Him to become the Ransom-sacrifice for Father Adam. Whoever was to be the Ransom, or corresponding price for Adam, and consequently the Savior of the world, would have to be perfect, and the Scriptures assure us that Jesus was that perfect Sacrifice (Heb. 7: 26; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

By His sacrifice, Jesus became the inheritor of the rights and privileges which had originally belonged to father Adam, but which Adam had forfeited by his wilful sin (Rom. 5: 19; 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22). Jesus thus earned the right to be called —

The Second Adam

When He was raised from the dead as a spirit being of the Divine nature, Jesus received the additional title, the Second Adam (1 Cor. 15: 45-47; *compare* Matt. 19: 28). As the second Adam, He took the place of the first Adam and became the new head, or father, of the human race — an office that He will exercise to the full in the coming time of "restitution" (Acts 3: 20, 21).

Both of these expressions remind us of Jesus' faithfulness, humility, and obedience to all the Heavenly Father's arrangements, even unto death on the cross. By so doing, He became the Ransom-sacrifice for Adam (*and the entire unborn race in him*), and also secured for Himself His claim to all of His present and prospective riches in honor, glory, dignity, and power.

* * *

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MEMORIAL DATE FOR 2003

Monday, April 14, after 6:00 p.m.

Our Lord's Memorial falls on Monday, April 14, after 6:00 p.m. This is calculated as follows (all times Universal Time, or Greenwich Mean Time): The vernal equinox is on March 21, 1:01 a.m.; the new moon nearest this equinox is on April 1, 7:20 p.m.; add to this, 2 hours 21 minutes to get Jerusalem time = 9:41 p.m.; so Nisan 1 is from 6:00 p.m. April 1, to 6:00 p.m. April 2; Nisan 14 begins 13 full days later, on Monday, April 14, 6:00 p.m., ending Tuesday, April 15, 6:00 p.m. May God bless all His consecrated people in this connection. Please send us reports.

GENERAL CONVENTIONS FOR 2003

At-a-glance

United States: *California*, February 15-17 (Dates Revised); *Florida*, March 14-16; *Massachusetts*, April 25-27; *Michigan*, May 24-26; *Philadelphia Area*, July 3-6; *Ohio*, August 15-17; *Illinois*, October 3-5; *Oklahoma*, November 7-9

Details

United States

California, February 15-17 (Saturday-Monday)

Site: Country Side Suites, 204 N. Vineyard Ave., Ontario, CA 91764; Telephone (800) 248-4661 or (909) 937-9700; Sales Fax (909) 937-3414. *Rates and Reservations:* 1-2 occupants, \$69.00, 3-4 occupants, \$79.00; all rooms plus 11.85% tax; check-in after 3:00 p.m.; check-out noon. Any cancellations of guaranteed reservations must be done 24 hours prior to arrival. Free and frequent shuttle bus transport is available (only 5 minutes from airport to hotel). Please make room reservations through the Class Secretary, Mrs. Mary Detzler, 6941 Abel Stearns Ave., Riverside, CA 92509; telephone (909) 779-0331.

Florida, March 14-16 (Friday-Sunday)

Site: (New Location) Oceanfront Comfort Inn, 1515 N. First St., Jacksonville Beach, Fla., 32250; phone: (800) 654-8776. *Rates and Reservations:* \$72.00 for 1-4 guests, plus 13% tax. Reservations must be made directly with the hotel, and by February 15: *be sure to inform them that you are attending the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement Convention to secure the special rate.* Please make all other inquiries to Mrs. Beverly Blaine (Class Secretary), 3569 Anderson Drive, Ormond Beach, Fla. 32176; telephone (386) 441-9836.

SERVICES BY VISITING MINISTERS

Carl W. Seebald

Grand Rapids, Michigan, February 2

Ralph Herzig

California Convention, February 15-17; New Haven, Connecticut, March 16

Richard Blaine

Florida Convention, March 14-16

Robert Herzig

Auburn, Massachusetts, March 9; Springfield, Massachusetts, April 6

John Detzler

California Convention, February 15-17

Leon Snyder

Riverside, California, February 12; California Convention, February 15-17; Las Vegas, Nevada, February 19, 20; Broomfield, Colorado, February 22, 23; Seattle, Washington, February 24, 25; Muskegon, Michigan, March 2

Baron Duncan

Pittsfield, Mass., April 13

Tom Cimbura

California Convention, February 15-17; West Palm Beach, Florida, April 5, 6; Barbados, April 8-10; Trinidad, April 11-15; Jamaica Convention, April 18-21; Jacksonville, Florida, April 23

Don Lewis

California Convention, February 15-17

James Shaw

California Convention, February 15-17

Evangelists' Services

Robert Branconnier, Visits cancelled due to illness.

Jon Hanning, Erie, Pennsylvania, March 1, 2

Harry Hammer, Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 5; Muskegon, Michigan, April 6

Daniel Herzig, Pittsfield, Mass., February 9; Boston, Mass., February 23

David Lounsbury, New York City, March 2

Harold Solomon, Springfield, Mass., February 2; Boston, Mass., March 23

Robert Steenrod, Louisville, Kentucky, February 22;

Cincinnati, Ohio, February 23; Derry, Pennsylvania, April 6

E. Tomkiewicz, Minneapolis, March 29, 30

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