

WHY DOES
A LOVING

GOD

PERMIT

CALAMITIES

HURRICANES, TORNADOES,
EARTHQUAKES, TSUNAMIS,
PESTILENCES, DROUGHTS...





Noble and good in the sight of both God and man are the generous impulses of charity and sympathy, awakened by hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes etc. Not all of the charitable are consecrated and some are even infidels—yet they are an evidence that at least some of the original Godlikeness remains in humankind.

We live in a time when selfishness and greed are as great as in any other period in history, yet millions of dollars are generously poured forth to aid suffering humanity.

Some Christian people's hearts, in the presence of great calamities, overflow with sympathy and Godlike love, yet declare that God is the director and cause of all disaster and trouble, which proves their hearts are better and more sound than their theology.

Man by sin and selfishness brings much trouble upon himself. The droughts, famines, pestilences, disrupted weather conditions, etc., prophesied for "*the day of His [the Lord's] preparation [for the coming thousand-year reign of peace]*"

(Nahum 2: 3), are brought on in part by man's selfishness by the depleting of the forests and soil, commercialism, by de-vitalization of natural foods, by war preparations and by the upsetting of atmospheric conditions. God in accomplishing His plans, works largely through natural means and uses the wrath of man to praise Him; and the remainder of wrath He restrains. (Psa. 76: 7-10)

Let us look carefully, reasonably and Scripturally at the question, Why does a loving God permit calamities?



THE WORST CALAMITY

It is unthinkable to charge the Almighty as the cause of earth's calamities, but such evils would be minor in comparison with the thought inherited from the Dark Ages, that God premeditated, planned, from before the foundation of the world, for the everlasting torture of the great majority of mankind. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and epidemics of disease, would be minute in comparison with such diabolical schemes and preparations as are accredited to God by many well-meaning but blinded people, who suffer still

from the superstition, ignorance and blindness of the Dark Ages and its creeds. That such false conceptions of the justice and love of our Creator should ever have gained a foothold in human minds to distort the view of every right and good quality is sad indeed. The difficulty is that men have been led to believe that the very Bible which declares God's true character of love and justice is the authority for these devilish doctrines; whereas these false interpretations were originated in the Dark Ages by those who were far from God and who were involved in burning alive real Bible believers. O LORD, grant your people a great opening of the eyes of their understanding, that they may be able to comprehend the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of your love and mercy toward your creatures, through Christ!

DEATH PENALTY



We must remember that the Creator especially “prepared” in advance the Garden of Eden for man's comfort and enjoyment of the favors of life, and a fitting place for his trial (Gen. 2: 8). God foresaw man's fall and provided that the penalty

of sin, “*dying you shall die,*” should be served out gradually by contact with the unfavorable conditions of climate, thorns, weeds, storms, floods and earthquakes of the unprepared earth (Gen. 2: 17, margin). Earth’s final perfection would require 7,000 years more to fit it entirely for the habitation of perfect, obedient, human beings. Adam and Eve went forth from Eden as convicts, under a sentence of death, self-convicted under the most just of any trial.

The convicts esteemed it a mercy to be permitted to die gradually rather than suddenly; while to the Creator and Judge this was expedient because of His plan for their future, in which such experience with imperfect conditions would be of great value—for the discipline and final redemption and restoration of the race.

God foresaw that the death penalty, inflicted in this manner, would, through experience, furnish man such a lesson on the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its evil results as would never need to be repeated—a lesson which would profit all in their quest for eternal life. God also designed that the exercise of man’s mental faculties in coping

with the degradation of this evil world as well as the exercise of his moral faculties in combating his own weaknesses would prove beneficial in preparing him for Millennial instruction.

ETERNAL TORMENT



Had the sentence of God condemned the race to an eternity of torment and anguish as some believe; who could defend such a sentence as just, or loving, or in any sense good? Surely no one of a sound mind! But when it is seen that the Scriptures teach that death—extinction (Rom. 6: 23; Isa. 43: 17)—not life in torment is the penalty pronounced and inflicted, it is reasonable. God has a right to demand absolute obedience from His perfect creatures, when placed under perfect conditions, as Adam was. The decree that none shall live forever, except those who do not sin is both a wise and a just provision for the everlasting welfare of all.

There is a depth of meaning in the Creator's words as He sent forth His tried and justly-condemned creatures to labor among the thorns and briars, to pain, sorrow, and disease, and to be subject to the casualties and calamities of

nature's unfinished work. He said, "Cursed is the ground for your sake" (Gen. 3: 17-19); the earth in general is in its present imperfect condition for your profit and experience, even though you may not recognize it to be so. Adam would have liked to retain continual access to the garden's life sustaining fruit, to avoid hard labor and to enable him fully to sustain his vital powers and live forever; but in loving consideration for man's ultimate good, no less than just, and in respect for His own sentence of death, God prevented the way back to the Garden, in order that the death sentence should not fail of execution and in order that sinners should not live forever and perpetuate sin (Gen. 3: 22-24).



BENEFITS OF THE CURSE

The children of the condemned pair inherited the effects of their parents' fall into sin and its imperfections and weaknesses, and also the penalties of these; for "*who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*" The whole race as convict laborers, have been learning what sin and evil are, and their undesirable results.

We see then that God's action in exposing His creatures to death, pain and various calamities was, first of all, one which related only to man's present life on earth. God did give the promise that, somehow and at some time, a son of the woman would accomplish deliverance (Gen. 3: 15). But it was then vague and indefinite, merely a glimmer of hope, to show that though God dealt severely with them, and on lines of law and justice, yet He sympathized with the race, and ultimately, without violating justice, or ignoring His own righteous sentence of death, would eventually bring relief.

A WAY PROVIDED



St. Paul tells us that God adopted a method for the recovery of humanity from that original sentence of death that came upon all as the result of Adam's sin. This would show the justice of His sentence and the unchangeableness of His justice, and yet permit the race to use their experience with evil in order to return to harmony with and obedience to their Creator and His just and reasonable laws and regulations. This Divine Plan, made it possible for God to remain just

and unchangeable in His attitude toward sin and sinners, and yet release them from the penalty of sin as stated by St. Paul in Rom. 3: 24-26. In brief, this plan provided that another perfect man, who by obedience to the law of God would prove His worthiness of eternal life, and by a willing sacrifice of his human life be able to redeem the forfeited life of Adam and of his posterity. It is written, *“in Adam all die,”* and *“By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation”* So *“by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”* (I Cor. 15: 22; Rom. 5: 18, 19). God devised the marvelous plan of transferring His only begotten Son from the spiritual plane to the human nature, providing a man fit for sacrifice —*“the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all”;* *“though He was rich [though He possessed spirit glory, honor and riches of wisdom and power above both angels and men], yet for your sakes He became poor humbling Himself to a lower nature, that of a man, being obedient even unto death, that you through His poverty might be rich”* (I Tim. 2: 5, 6; 2 Cor. 8: 9). The One first created, *“the first-born of every creature”* (Col. 1: 15), *“the*

beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. 3: 14), the one who had known God’s character longer, more fully and more intimately than any other being, the one in fact who had been honored as Jehovah’s chief intelligent and active Agent in the creation of angels as well as of men, the one by whom all things were made, and aside from whom not anything was made (John 1: 3; Col. 1: 16, 17). This great being, Jehovah’s Vicegerent, the one next to Himself in dignity, honor and office was entrusted by the Almighty with the great work of redeeming and restoring humanity.

MAN’S DELIVERANCE



To redeem the human race would cost the sacrifice of Jesus’ own life as their ransom-price, with all that it implied of suffering and self-denial. To restore them would require the exercise of Divine power to open the prison-house of death, to break the fetters of sin, prejudice and superstition, and to give all the redeemed the fullest opportunity to show whether they prefer good or evil, righteousness or sin, truth or error and to destroy all who love and work iniquity (Psa.

145: 20). Jehovah's Vicegerent shall develop and perfect all who love and choose life upon its only condition, righteousness (Psa. 37: 34-40).

To know the Father's plan and His privilege of co-operation in its execution was to appreciate it and joyfully to engage therein. Willingly our Lord Jesus laid aside the glory of the higher nature as the *Logos*, which He had with the Father from before the creation of the human race (John 17: 5; 2 Cor. 8: 9). He was "*made flesh*" (John 1: 14; Heb. 2: 9, 10, 8), became a man at thirty years of age, and then began the great work of Atonement, sacrificing Himself for the cancelation of the sin of the first man, to recover Adam and his race by dying on their behalf, as their Redeemer. By giving to Justice the price for their liberty from Divine condemnation, He thereby secured the right to cancel the death sentence on Adam and the human race.



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