

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

5: PLAN OF SALVATION

1. SIN DEFINED

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James 4:17. “Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also the law. For sin is the transgression of the law.” I John 3:4. “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” I John 5:17.

“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:12, 23.

“To many minds, the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery, of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt, they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's word, and essential to salvation.

“There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties; and such as are actuated by a disposition to doubt and cavil, seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.

“It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin, to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion.” The Great Controversy, pages 492, 493.

What Is Sin? Sin is slumber, unconscious of wrong,
Made pleasant by pleasure, and sweetened with song,
A beauteous beginning, voluptuous breath,
But ending in dismalness, darkness, and death.

2. CHRIST, MAN'S ONLY SAVIOUR

“We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” I John 4:14. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

“The sacrifice demanded by their transgression, revealed to Adam and Eve the sacred character of the law of God; and they saw, as they had never seen before, the guilt of sin, and its dire results. In their remorse and anguish they pleaded that the penalty might not fall upon Him whose love had been the source of all their joy; rather let it descend upon them and their posterity.

“They were told that since the law of Jehovah is the foundation of His government in heaven as well as upon the earth, even the life of an angel could not be accepted as a sacrifice for its transgression. Not one of its precepts could be abrogated or changed to meet man in his fallen condition; but the Son of God, who had created man, could make an atonement for him. As Adam's transgression had brought wretchedness and death, so the sacrifice of Christ would bring life and immortality.” Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 66, 67.

“Christ gave Himself to a shameful, agonizing death, showing His great travail of soul to save the perishing. O, Christ is able, Christ is willing, Christ is longing, to save all who will come unto Him. Talk to souls in peril, and get them to behold Jesus upon the cross, dying to make it possible for Him to pardon.” Testimonies, Vol. 6, pages 66, 67.

“It is only through the merits of Jesus that our transgressions can be pardoned. Those who feel no need of the blood of Christ, who feel that without divine grace they can by their own works secure the approval of God, are making the same mistake as did Cain. If they do not accept the cleansing blood, they are under condemnation. There is no other provision made whereby they can be released from the thralldom of sin.

“The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle, that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation. It is claimed by some that the human race is in need, not of redemption, but of development, that it can refine, elevate, and regenerate itself. As Cain thought to secure the divine favor by an offering that lacked the blood of a sacrifice, so do these expect to exalt humanity to the divine standard, independent of the atonement. The history of Cain shows what must be the result. It shows what man will become apart from Christ. Humanity has no power to regenerate itself. It does not tend upward, toward the divine, but downward, toward the satanic. Christ is our only hope. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” “Neither is there salvation in any other.” Acts 4:12. Patriarchs and Prophets, page 73.

3. CHRIST'S INVITATION

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1. “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17.

“Christ will impart to His messengers the same yearning love that He Himself has in seeking for the lost. We are not merely to say, “Come.” There are those who hear the call, but their ears are too dull to take in its meaning. Their eyes are too blind to see anything good in store for them. Many realize their great degradation. They say, I am not fit to be helped; leave me alone. But the workers must not desist. In tender, pitying love, lay hold of the discouraged and helpless ones. Give them your courage, your hope, your strength. By kindness compel them to come. “Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” Jude 22, 23. Christ's Object Lessons, pages 235, 236.

“Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” These words of comfort were spoken to the multitude that followed Jesus the Savior had said that only through Himself could men receive a knowledge of God. He had spoken of His disciples as the ones to whom a knowledge of heavenly things had been given. But He left none to feel themselves shut out from His care and love. All who labor and are heavy laden may come unto Him. . . . Tenderly He bade the toiling people, “Take My

yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

“In these words, Christ is speaking to every human being. Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6. He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart.

“The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Savior. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies, the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord “tells the number of the stars;” and yet “He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:1, 3. “Come unto Me,” is His invitation.” The Desire of Ages, pages 328, 329.

4. MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:14-18.

“Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted. His life is our example. He shows by His willing obedience that man may keep the law of God, and that transgression of the law, not obedience to it, brings him into bondage. The Savior was full of compassion and love; He never spurned the truly penitent, however great their guilt; but He severely denounced hypocrisy of every sort. He is acquainted with the sins of men, He knows all their acts and reads their secret motives; yet He does not turn away from them in their iniquity. He pleads and reasons with the sinner, and in one sense—that of having Himself borne the weakness of humanity—He puts Himself on a level with him. “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Testimonies, Vol. 4, page 294.

“Think of what Christ accomplished during His earthly ministry. How earnest, how untiring, were His efforts! He allowed nothing to turn Him aside from the work given Him. Are we following in His footsteps? He gave up all to carry out God's plan of mercy for the fallen race. In the fulfillment of the purpose of Heaven, He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He had had no communion with sin, had known nothing of it; but He came to this world, and took upon His sinless soul the guilt of sinful man, that sinners might stand justified before God. He grappled with temptation, overcoming in our behalf. The Son of God, pure and unsullied, bore the penalty of transgression, and received the stroke of death that brought deliverance to the race.” The Colporteur Evangelist, page 38.

“Where Jesus reigns there is no night, For He is wisdom, love, and light; No raging sea nor tempest dread, But calm and quietness instead; No anxious care, no blind unrest, No heavy heart by guilt

oppressed. No discontent, no gloomy days, But brightest hope and sweetest praise. No stumbling oft, no galling chains, No shame, no sin, where Jesus reigns.”

5. CHRIST CAME TO SAVE, NOT TO CONDEMN

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” John 3:14-21.

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” He “sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16, 17. The love of God embraces all mankind. Christ, in giving the commission to the disciples, said, “Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15.

“Christ intended that a greater work should be done in behalf of men than we have yet seen. He did not intend that such large numbers should choose to stand under the banner of Satan, and be enrolled as rebels against the government of God. The world's Redeemer did not design that His purchased inheritance should live and die in their sins. Why, then, are so few reached and saved?-It is because so many of those who profess to be Christians are working in the same lines as the great apostate. Thousands who know not God might today be rejoicing in His love if those who claim to serve Him would work as Christ worked.” Testimonies, Vol. 6, page 273.

“Christ was a faithful reprove. Never lived there another who so hated evil; never another whose denunciation of it was so fearless. To all things untrue and base His very presence was a rebuke. In the light of His purity, men saw themselves unclean, their life's aims mean and false. Yet He drew them. He who had created man, understood the value of humanity. Evil He denounced as the foe of those whom He was seeking to bless and to save. In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of his divine relationship.

“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” I John 3:17. Looking upon men in their suffering and degradation, Christ perceived ground for hope where appeared only despair and ruin. Wherever there existed a sense of need, there He saw opportunity for uplifting.” Education, page 79.

“Christ gave Himself, an atoning sacrifice, for the saving of a lost world. He was treated as we deserve, in order that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. “With His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5. Testimonies, Vol. 8, pages 208, 209.

6. CHRIST'S POWER TO SAVE

“In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Hebrews 2:18. “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.” Hebrews 7:25. “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from

falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Jude 24, 25. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:" 2 Corinthians 9:8. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Ephesians 3:20, 21.

"There is no spiritual strength for us in constantly brooding over our weakness and back sliding, and bemoaning the power of Satan. This great truth must be established as a living principle in our minds and hearts, the efficacy of the offering made for us; that God can and does save to the uttermost all who come unto Him complying with the conditions specified in His word.

"Our work is to place our will on the side of God's will. Then, through the blood of the atonement, we become partakers of the divine nature; through Christ we are children of God, and we have the assurance that God loves us even as He loved His Son.

"We are one with Jesus. We walk where Christ leads the way; He has power to dispel the dark shadows which Satan casts across our path; and in place of darkness and discouragement, the sunlight of His glory shines into our hearts." Testimonies, Vol. 5, page 741.

"Christ offered up His broken body to purchase back God's heritage, to give man another trial. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.

"By His spotless life, His obedience, His death on the cross of Calvary, Christ interceded for the lost race. And now, not as a mere petitioner does the Captain of our salvation intercede for us, but as a Conqueror claiming His victory. His offering is complete, and as our Intercessor He executes His self-appointed work, holding before God the censer containing His own spotless merits and the prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving of His people. Perfumed with the fragrance of His righteousness, these ascend to God as a sweet savor. The offering is wholly acceptable, and pardon covers all transgression." Christ's Object Lessons, page 156.

7: HOW THE CROSS PROVIDES FORGIVENESS

We must consider another aspect of this heavenly drama which will further illuminate God's love and sacrifice. How does the death of one man, provide forgiveness for all who have sinned? The Bible says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission (of sins)." Hebrews 9:22. Remission, of course, means forgiveness. How does Christ's death make it possible for Him to forgive sin? It was necessary for Jesus to suffer the second death in order to acquire the power to forgive.

Forgiveness is rooted in an act of substitution. Whoever forgives another person must actually substitute himself for the one he forgives, and be willing to suffer the consequences of the wrong done. For example, if I forgive someone a debt, I must be prepared to suffer the loss of the amount. If I forgive a blow, I must be willing to suffer the pain of it, without requiring the one who gave it to be punished.

Justice requires that every offender be recompensed in proportion to what he did: an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. The one who gives a blow must also suffer an equal blow in return. Forgiveness, though, relieves the offender from receiving what he legally deserves. The forgiver accepts the consequence himself in order that the guilty one can go free without punishment. Thus there is clearly a substitution of the innocent for the guilty in every act of forgiveness.

Imagine if a murdered man could forgive his murderer from beyond the grave. He would, in effect, be consenting to his own death in order that the killer would not be punished. By accepting the results of

the offense against him, he allows his own death to satisfy the penalty which could be legally laid upon the murderer.

This illustration brings us very close to the heart of the atonement. We are dealing here with the repair of a broken relationship. That is what atonement really is. Two parties are always involved, the wronged and the wrongdoer. In this case it is God, the wronged, and man, the one who sins against Him. Justice demands an adequate compensation of the sin. Only two courses are possible: either justice will exact the prescribed penalty, or there must be forgiveness from the offended one. If forgiveness is extended, the forgiver will have to accept the consequences of the sin, and suffer it in place of the guilty. The penalty for sin is death. So in order to grant forgiveness to the sinner, Jesus must be willing to bear in His own body the same punishment that the broken law would demand of the sinner.

The punishment for sin is not the first death, but the second death. That is why the protracted agony of Jesus on the cross was totally unlike any other death. Thousands of criminals were crucified in the same physical way that Christ was nailed to the cross, *but they suffered only the bodily pain of the first death*. He experienced the awful condemnation and separation from God that the vilest of sinners will feel in the lake of fire. His sensitive nature was traumatized by sharing vicariously the guilt of foul rapes, murders, and atrocities. He became sin in order to allow the full wrath of the law to fall upon Him in exactly the same way it would fall upon the lost.

In no other way can we explain the mysterious anguish of spirit which surrounded our Saviour in His closing hours of life. From the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus bore the accumulated sins of mankind on His breaking heart. Not one ray of light was permitted to penetrate the blanket of total alienation from His Father in heaven. In order to take the place of guilty sinners and to provide forgiveness there could be no difference in their penalty and His penalty.

Let no one suggest that the Father did not suffer equally with His Son. The divine forbearance of God in allowing wicked men to torture His Son to death is the ultimate proof that He loves us with the same love that He loved Jesus. The choice He faced was very simple. He could spare the Son or He could spare us. There was no other choice. The law had been broken; the law which was holy and perfect. As a reflection of His character it could not be changed or destroyed. The penalty had to be paid. The Father loved those who had broken His law, but He also loved His Son.

God looked upon those wicked men as they spat upon Jesus and hit Him in the face with their fists. They were unworthy to touch the hem of His garment, but they were mauling Him to death. He held the power in His hand to smite those little men into oblivion. He could save His Son from cruel taunts and blows, but if He intervened not one human being would ever live again. Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, and every other child of Adam would be lost for eternity. Their resurrection depended wholly upon the death and resurrection of His Beloved Son. In His omniscience God must have remembered every individual face and name, even of those who had not yet been born.

In that moment God thought about you and me. Even though He saw all our miserable failures He still wanted us to be with Him for eternity. He knew the great majority would not accept the offer of eternal life with Him, even though it would be provided at such a fearful cost. But He also knew that a few would love Him and gladly receive the substitutionary death of His Son in their behalf. So God turned away from His Son, and allowed Him to be crushed to death under the weight of sins He did not commit. Even the sun hid its face from the terrible scene, and the earth shuddered in protest. "It is finished," Jesus cried, and yielded up His life. John 19:30.