

1. Old Testament Preparation for the Second Phase of Creation

The view presented in this treatise is that the Creative Process as a whole embraces three distinct and successive phases. The first phase is identical with the totality of physical existence—that order of being manifested in what is commonly called the Kingdom of Nature, of which man in his “natural” (unconverted, unregenerated, unredeemed) state is here considered a part. The second phase embraces the totality of spiritual life,—that order of being which is realized, in regenerated souls, in the Kingdom of Grace. The third phase embraces the totality of eternal (“celestial”) life—that order of being which will be manifested ultimately, in the immortalized saints, in the Kingdom of Glory. Generally speaking, the first phase is known in theology as the Creation, Generation, or Old or Physical Creation, and the last two phases together, by way of contrast, as the Re-creation, Re-generation, or the New or Spiritual Creation.

The question as to whether man is at present in a “natural” or in an “unnatural” state is, of course, one that has been long and strenuously debated by theologians. Naturally, one’s answer to this question will depend largely upon one’s interpretation of the account given in the third chapter of Genesis of the temptation and disobedience of our first parents. Was man as originally created and placed upon the earth in a perfectly “natural” state? It will be remembered that, according to Scripture, God looked out upon everything which He had made, at the conclusion of His creative activity, and pronounced it “very good” (Gen. 1:31). If man, then, existed originally in a perfectly “natural” state, did he, by yielding to temptation, fall into an “unnatural” state? And did all Nature fall with him? Evidently, as pointed out heretofore, the Scriptures so teach (cf. Gen. 3:14-20 and Rom. 8:18-23). What, then, would be man’s moral condition today, had the first representatives of the race moulded their wills in habitual conformity to the Will of God and thus continued to live in complete obedience to Him and in unhindered communion with Him—that is to say, had they lived their lives without eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, or without ever actually yielding to the experience of sin? And

in case they had so lived, *and thus attained holiness—which can be attained only by man's voluntary conforming of his own will to the Divine Will*—by what means would they have propagated the race? Could they have done so purely by the power of thought? And had they so lived, would they ever have died, that is, the death of the body, as all men die today? All these questions I regard as insoluble in the light of our present knowledge, and to a large degree irrelevant, at least to the purpose of this treatise. To my way of thinking, the Scriptures teach clearly that man's body was created mortal, that his first state was largely one of untried innocence; that in that state, of course, he enjoyed union with God and un-hindered access to God, the Source of all life; and that, while in that state, by partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Life (the real symbol of his union with God; cf. Rev. 22:1-2), he had the means daily of maintaining his physical youth and vigor, that is to say, the means of counteracting the law of mortality to which his body was made subject by creation. Hence, just as soon as he sinned, and thus became separated from God by his sin, God expelled him from Eden, and "placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Why was this done? In order that the man might not eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life and thus make himself, in his state of rebellion against God, immortal (Gen. 3:22-24). This incident teaches us clearly that *no man in a state of unforgiven sin can possibly have access to the Source of life everlasting, that our holy God can have no concord whatever with iniquity*. Our first parents' expulsion from Eden was necessary, in order that the law of mortality to which they were inherently subject might begin to operate in their physical constitutions and thus execute the penalty of sin, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). Moreover, we and *all* their posterity suffer the consequences of their sin in the fact that we too must be born outside the Garden of Eden, and being thus without access to the fruit of the Tree of Life, we too must die physically even as they died (Gen. 5:5; Rom. 5:12). (As a matter of fact, the story of the temptation and fall of our first parents as given in Genesis is, in its bold outlines, repeated in the experience of every accountable human being.) Thus by sin

came death, that is, literal physical death; death is the universal penalty which the race suffers as a consequence of the sin of Adam. To this statement I would add, however, that the benevolence of God is seen in the fact that by His almighty power He has overruled and conquered even death itself, in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, the Head of the New Creation, and has made it possible for His saints, through their living the life of the Spirit, ultimately to be redeemed both in spirit and in body, and to be clothed in glory and honor and immortality. Salvation, incidentally, is threefold. First, there is the *daily salvation from physical death* which all men enjoy by utilizing the means which Nature's God has provided for their physical preservation. If God did not provide the food which they eat, the water which they drink, the air they breathe, and even the very ground they walk on, all men would soon perish. Second, there is the *salvation from the guilt of sin*, which is enjoyed by the saints of God on the condition of their union with Christ by faith, repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). And in the third place there is the eternal salvation to be enjoyed by God's elect in the next life, on the condition of their living the life with the Holy Spirit in this present existence. This will be *salvation from the very consequences of sin* (the chief and most terrible of which is physical death) in the putting on of immortality, the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23, Phil. 3:20-21). These three phases, or kinds, of salvation correspond to physical, spiritual, and eternal life, respectively, and they are all free gifts of God. *Every form of life in the totality of being is a Divine gift.*

To all those who would raise the question as to why God created man capable of sinning in the first place, I would reply that had He brought into existence a creature incapable of sinning, *that creature certainly would not have been a man.* Those attributes which constitute us human beings are the powers of self-consciousness and self-determination (free will). In order to have a creature capable voluntarily of loving and serving Him, and of thus growing into a state of holiness, the Creator necessarily endowed that creature, with *the power to choose to love and serve Him.* Hence, it naturally follows that if holiness is the end for which God created man, and the end to which the Divine Will has ordered him, the only

means possible to the attainment of such an end were implanted within him by the Creator, namely, the powers of intelligence and free will. Therefore, this must be, after all, the best of all possible worlds for the attainment of that natural and proper end for which God created the human race and to which He has ordered it.

After all, however, speculation with regard to such matters is pretty generally fruitless. The important matter for our consideration is the fact of what God has done, is doing, and will do for man as he now is or as we know him, in order that he may ultimately enjoy holiness or fulness of being. The use of such terms as "natural," "unnatural," and "supernatural," often contributes to confusion more than to clarity and understanding, for the very obvious reason that "nature" is itself such an ambiguous term. I take it for granted that God foreknew the fact of man's disobedience, certainly if not as a fact, as a very great probability (whether even Omniscience Himself can foreknow the act of a spirit is a debatable question); and that the Divine Plan of the Universe embraced, as a result of this foreknowledge, all the necessary provisions for his regeneration and his redemption in body, soul, and spirit. (1 Thess. 5:23). It should be noted, however, that foreknowledge is *not* necessarily foreordination.) Hence, had man never yielded to temptation and continued to live in complete conformity to the Divine Will, the process of creation probably would have followed different lines from those which it has taken as a consequence of his disobedience. I consider it perfectly legitimate, therefore, to regard the Creative Process as still going on, and to interpret redemption as the final stage of that Process, the end products of which will be the saints themselves when they stand at last in the presence of God clothed in glory and honor and incorruption. Had the Creative Process proceeded along other lines than those which it has taken in consequence of man's fall into sin, the end undoubtedly would have been the same. *God's ultimate end in Creation is a holy race morally fitted to have fellowship with him eternally.* (Rom. 8:29, 30; cf. 2 Cor. 5:1-5) The truth we are concerned with here, therefore, is that the eternal purpose of God, the mystery of His Will, has been, even from before the foundation of the world, to send Jesus Christ in the fulness of the time to make Atonement for sin, to publish

the Gospel, to establish the Church, and to unite both Jews and Gentiles in that Church, the one Body of Christ (Eph. 3:1-12). All questions as to what course the Creative Process would have taken in case man had never experienced sin are beside the point and irrelevant to the present discussion. We are concerned here only with what actually did happen, is happening, and will happen, in the light of Scripture teaching.

Therefore, we are now ready to study the work done by the Holy Spirit preparatory to the inauguration of the second phase of the Creative Process; that is, preparatory to the death, resurrection and coronation of Christ, and the establishment of the New Institution, the Christian System; in a word, the work of the Holy Spirit under the Old Covenant, or throughout the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations.

2. The Dispensations of Revealed Religion

Every human being is a nexus of certain lifelong relationships into which he enters naturally at birth. He does not choose these relationships, nor can he successfully escape them. He is born into them, and he sustains them throughout this present life. They are inherent to the order of creation to which humanity belongs.

The first of these relationships is that of *dependence upon God*, as creature upon Creator. Man is a creature. He is dependent upon Nature and upon Nature's God for the ground he walks on, the air he breathes, the water he drinks, and the food by which his physical life is sustained. The second of these relationships is that of *equality with his fellow-men*. "All men are created equal," affirms our Declaration of Independence. What does this mean? Obviously, men are not equal physically, nor are they equal intellectually or morally; as a matter of fact, they are not even born with equal potentialities. How, then, are they equal? They are equal only in the sense that all have been created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and one man's "soul" or "life" is, therefore, worth as much as another's in the sight of God. Hence Christ died for all alike, and all alike may be justified by faith in Him. The basis of equality among human beings is spiritual and only spiritual. Incidentally, this article of faith underlies every phase of our Western culture, and the moment we depart