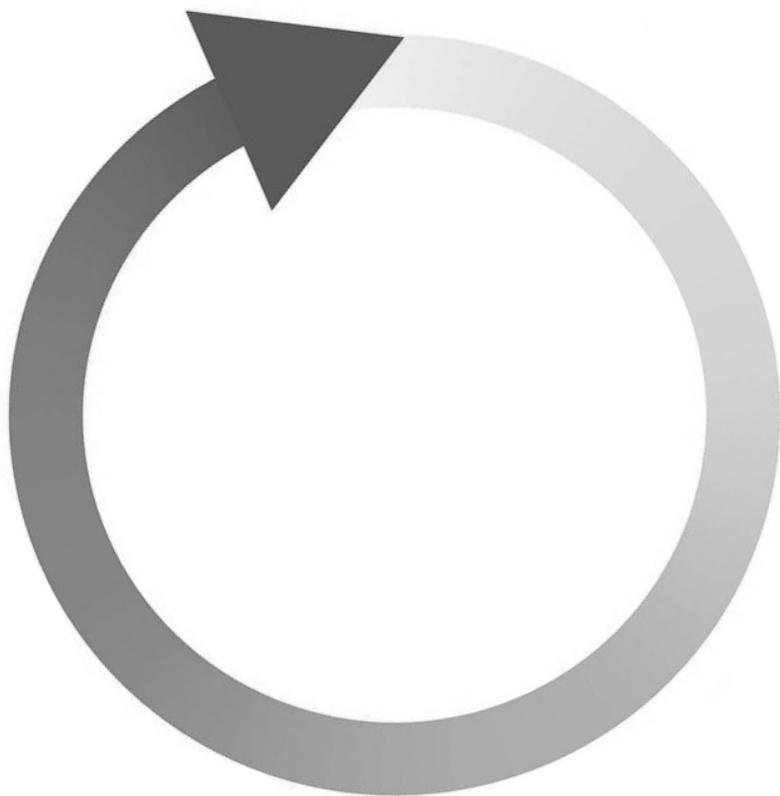


# Full Circle



Dave Fiedler

## Scene 1

# Lucifer

THE central issue of the great controversy between Lucifer and Christ has always been the law of God. It's important, then, that we have a clear concept of what that law entailed. Jesus' response to the lawyer's question about the "greatest commandment" is a good starting point. Love to God and love to man, He said, were the two commandments which supported all the law and the prophets. Similarly, Paul points to love as the fulfilling of the law. Ellen White paints that same thought in practical, tangible terms:

To give is to live.<sup>1</sup>

The great law of life is a law of service.<sup>2</sup>

Self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation.<sup>3</sup>

Self-renunciation is the great law of self-preservation, and self-preservation is the law of self-destruction.<sup>4</sup>

As long as loving service was the universal principle of operation, all was good. But a change came.

In heaven itself this law was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation.... Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men.... and the night of woe settled down upon the world.<sup>5</sup>

When God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image," Satan was jealous of Jesus. He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred.<sup>6</sup>

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1. *Desire of Ages*, 623

2. *Education*, 103

3. *Education*, 110

4. *Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1897

5. *Desire of Ages*, 21

6. *Early Writings*, 145

In another fascinating glimpse into those long-ago events, we see a particular focus of Lucifer's self-seeking:

The creation of our world was brought into the councils of heaven. There the covering cherub prepared his request that he should be made prince to govern the world then in prospect. This was not accorded him. Jesus Christ was to rule the earthly kingdom.... Lucifer was jealous of Christ and this jealousy worked into rebellion and he carried with him a large number of the holy angels.<sup>7</sup>

Lucifer wanted *something* that he felt God was not providing. Whether it all began with a longing for some material object (his own planet, maybe?), or some emotional desire (a hunger for honor, for instance), or maybe some elevated status in the governmental or social structures of heaven (preeminence over Christ, eventually), there was *something* that God hadn't given him. From his perspective, his rightful needs were not being met. Or, more bluntly, God wasn't taking care of him like He ought to.

## The Core of Rebellion

And so, as all this was developing in Lucifer's mind, there came an occasion when the rubber met the road. We certainly don't know the details of the case, but we can easily grasp that there had to be a time when God said, "Lucifer, please do *this*." And for the first time in his life—the first time in *anyone's* life—Lucifer thought, "No, *that* is better."

Again, we don't know the details of what might have been involved. Was it a big issue? Or perhaps just a little one? We know that Lucifer was the director of the heavenly choir... what if the whole history of sin began with something as insignificant as God asking for a particular Opening Song when Lucifer had been planning on a different one?

In any case, in order to get to the point of finding fault with God's expressed will, one of two things had to have happened:

1. Either Lucifer believed that God had made a mistake, or
2. He believed that God had deliberately commanded something that was not in Lucifer's best interest.

It might have played out like this—"Oh wow! I can't believe it! I mean, God has been really smart in everything I've ever seen Him do before, but... just look at that! He made a mistake this time!"

Even if God had just made a "simple mistake," that was a serious concern. After all, God was in charge of running the universe!

Who could trust His wisdom if it had been proven faulty?

And if God hadn't made a mental mistake, it was even worse, because that could only mean that He was *intentionally* harming His subjects! Who could trust His love if it had been proven false?

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7. E.G. White, "Diary: Creation and the Sabbath," July 4, 1891; Manuscript 43b, 1891

All of which means that before the covering cherub could say or think, “No, *my idea* is better than what God wants,” he had to have already lost faith in God’s wisdom, and probably His love as well.

But that’s not all!

If Lucifer was smart enough to spot God’s mistake, that meant Lucifer was *smarter than God!* What’s more, if God *had* tried to trick Lucifer into doing something that wasn’t for his best good, then the mere fact that God had failed to fool him meant that Lucifer was *smarter than God!*

That’s the stuff that pride is made of. Now it would be easy for Lucifer to simply do what he was sure was the best thing—after all, *He was smarter than God!*

And that—the blatant act—is what we call disobedience.

But that’s not all!

Even if Lucifer never said a word about his disobedience, the influence of his actions told all the other angels, “You can’t depend on God to take care of you! You need to take charge of your own life! You need to do what God does. You need to exalt yourself!” That’s a lie.

But that’s not all!

Once Lucifer took the responsibility of caring for himself, it meant he had to do whatever it took to provide for himself. If necessary, that meant stealing. If necessary, that meant murder.

Like Jesus said, Lucifer was “a liar... and a murderer from the beginning.”<sup>8</sup>

## Faith is the Key

This cascade of sinful dominoes is the natural result of losing faith in God. It’s important to catch the significance of this. The whole ugly history of sin began when Lucifer lost faith in God. And that loss could only come in connection with some unfulfilled wish, some unmet desire. Lucifer *wanted* something, and when he didn’t get what he wanted, he concluded that God wasn’t doing the right thing. Whether he attributed that to an intellectual mistake or an intentional desire to limit or harm, doesn’t really matter. In short order, Lucifer lost his confidence in God’s love and wisdom.

Incidentally, that’s all faith is.

Faith is a very simple matter; it is confidence in God.<sup>9</sup>

That may not be the most profound of theological definitions for the word, but functional simplicity is pretty profound, and you’ll find that that definition *just works*. What’s more, understanding the loss of faith is just as simple.

What is it to be in an unsaved condition? Is it not to be living without that full confidence in God which is born of love, which leads us to take Him at His word?<sup>10</sup>

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8. John 8:44

9. *Youth’s Instructor*, August 30, 1894

10. *Bible Training School*, November 1, 1911

The practical reality of this simple idea is what accounts for all those fallen dominoes, not to mention fallen angels and fallen men. Notice the sequence again:

1. If I don't believe God is taking care of me, that's a loss of faith.
2. If I think I can do a better job of taking care of myself than God can, that's pride (and stupidity).
3. If I try taking care of myself in some way other than what God asks me to, that's overt disobedience.
4. If my influence convinces someone else that "self-serving" is better than trusting God, that's lying.
5. And if I put myself first, instead of loving my neighbor as myself, that's stealing, and—under enough pressure—it will become murder.

To keep a tight focus, that's all we'll take time to look at as far as the process of Lucifer's fall is concerned. But we'll also need to look at the accusations he made against the government of heaven. After all, if you're going to have an argument, there has to be some difference of opinion to argue about.

## The Accusations

1. Angels are holy by nature and wise enough to govern themselves, so they don't need God's law.
2. God was unfair when He exalted Jesus above Lucifer.
3. God is selfish.
4. God is unforgiving and revengeful.
5. God's law is defective, and needs to be changed.
6. It is impossible to obey God's law.
7. God's law is arbitrary.
8. God's law makes forgiveness impossible.
9. God is lying about all the above.

Of course, you will find some variation in the way these ideas are expressed in Ellen White's writings, but these nine categories seem broad enough to take in all those varied wordings. It is worth noting that this list of accusations is given here in the general chronological order in which Lucifer brought them up.

With that in mind, it's not hard to read between the lines a bit, and imagine why he made these claims and how his arguments may have been presented. For instance, once Lucifer had claimed that God was unforgiving and revengeful (#4), he had the difficult task of trying to demonstrate something that no one had ever seen! Under that pressure, it seems natural for the deceiver to point—not to anything that had ever actually happened—but to an imaginary picture of "what was coming" because of the "defects" in God's law.

Having claimed that the law was faulty (#5), he next had to find some means to make it look that way. After all, the angels had to be asking, "What's *wrong* with the

law? Why does it need to be changed?" As Ellen White describes it, that challenge left Lucifer empty handed:

Satan could present no defined reasons as to why he wished the law of God changed or abolished. He simply declared his conviction that the angels would be better off without the law, but could not tell in what way they would be advantaged.<sup>11</sup>

Well, if you don't have a "defined reason," you're going to have to make up an undefined one. And that's exactly what Lucifer did when he claimed that no one could obey (#6). Really, that had to be confusing to the other angels. You can almost hear them saying, "But Lucifer, we've been obeying that law forever!"

To which the highest angel in the heavenly courts responded, "Well, I'm smarter than you are, and I can't obey it. What's more, you shouldn't *have to!*"

By this point in the process, God had responded to at least some of the earlier claims, most specifically to the assertion that the law needed to be changed. What's interesting in Ellen White's telling of the story is that she never depicts God as saying, "I won't change My law." No, it's always, "The law is *perfect* and *cannot* be changed."

Perhaps Lucifer thought he saw a crack in God's case, a chance to make the Omniscient One look foolish. And so he comes back with what may have seemed a sensible rebuttal. It was wrong, of course, but even today it can *sound* right.

In heaven [Lucifer] complained against the law of God, declaring it unnecessary and arbitrary.<sup>12</sup>

Through his misrepresentation of God, Satan had made the law appear as an arbitrary exaction, enforced by God to keep his creatures from a higher education in the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>13</sup>

[Lucifer] began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings—laws that he declared were arbitrary, detrimental to the interests of the heavenly universe, and in need of change.<sup>14</sup>

The key word here is "arbitrary" (#7). To put Lucifer's argument into the current vernacular, it might sound like this: "God, your law is what it is just because you said that's what it was going to be! You made it up from scratch! All you have to do is announce a new, improved version!"

The root meaning of the word is pretty much, "because I said so." In other words, not based on any reality other than someone's decision. Here's how it was defined back in Ellen White's day:

ARBITRARY, a. [L. *arbitrarius*.]

1. Depending on will or discretion; not governed by any fixed rules.
2. Despotic; absolute in power; having no external control.<sup>15</sup>

11. *Signs of the Times*, November 14, 1895

12. *Review and Herald*, April 25, 1893

13. *Youth's Instructor*, January 21, 1897

14. *Signs of the Times*, July 23, 1902

15. *Webster's Dictionary*, 1828 edition as found on the E.G. White CD-ROM

The meaning has changed little in the last couple centuries. A contemporary source gives us:

ARBITRARY, adjective

1. Depending on individual discretion (as of a judge) and not fixed by law
2. a: Not restrained or limited in the exercise of power: ruling by absolute authority  
b: Marked by or resulting from the unrestrained and often tyrannical exercise of power
3. a: Based on or determined by individual preference or convenience rather than by necessity or the intrinsic nature of something  
b: Existing or coming about seemingly at random or by chance or as a capricious and unreasonable act of will<sup>16</sup>

The reason Lucifer's argument can still sound believable today is simply that most everything we think of as a "law" is, in fact, thoroughly arbitrary. Tax brackets, building codes, fuel efficiency standards, child labor regulations, compulsory education, pandemic travel restrictions, and speed limits are all defined by someone's "say-so." Whether it be congress, parliament, city hall, or some weird computer algorithm, those laws are what they are because someone said, "This is the law."

That doesn't mean these laws are necessarily bad. If they are based on common sense, they likely serve a useful purpose. On the whole, the majority of such laws clearly exist for good reason, and we should be thankful for them. But it's also important to recognize that *none* of these arbitrary laws can be defended as "perfect."

## Endlessly Debatable

This simple fact is what keeps politicians in business. Even in the most smoothly running, well-designed societies, there are always claims and counter-claims about the statutes of the land. "Things will be better if we just tweak this law a little bit." Maybe the sales tax should be 6.703% instead of 6.759%. Clearly, that would make *some* difference. Would it make the world better or worse? Well... opinions will vary. Hence, politics.

The point is twofold: no arbitrary law is ultimately defensible (let alone "perfect") to the smallest detail, and all arbitrary laws are eminently changeable. So, when we read that Lucifer claimed God's law was defective and needed tweaking (#5), there should be no surprise that he would soon be claiming that the law was arbitrary (#7).

When God denied this claim, Lucifer came back with another, one that has long puzzled many readers of Ellen White's account. She tells us that, "In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed... and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned."<sup>17</sup>

Satan declared that there is no forgiveness with God; that if God should forgive sin, he would make his law of no effect.<sup>18</sup>

16. merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arbitrary

17. *Desire of Ages*, 761

18. *Review and Herald*, January 19, 1911

Satan.... had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible.<sup>19</sup>

"Impossible." Hmm.... How could that be? What would Lucifer know about forgiveness? Who or what is going to tell God, "No, You can't forgive *anyone!*"

The claim seems so far-fetched that you end up wondering how Lucifer ever expected the angels to believe it. And yet, apparently it made some sense to a third of them....

The only way this eighth claim can even begin to appear logical, is to consider its relationship to the seventh accusation. It was, after all, Lucifer's comeback argument after God had pronounced him wrong about the law being arbitrary. Lucifer's "logic"<sup>20</sup> goes like this:

If—as God *claims*—the law is *not* arbitrary, (#7)

It means it's based on something other than God's personal authority.

In that case, the enforcement of the law is beyond God's control,

Hence, He cannot interfere to grant forgiveness. (#8)

Now, clearly, a government enforcing a law rumored to be impossible to obey, for which no provision of forgiveness exists, and imposing the death penalty for even the slightest infraction, does not sound like a good thing. Toss in the facts that the angels had only recently become more than vaguely aware that there *was* a law, and the likelihood that "death" was only partially comprehended since it had never been witnessed, and it all starts to sound like a confusing situation.

## A Time for Trust

In the midst of that confusion, the charges that God was unfair, selfish, and revengeful, must have seemed more plausible than they look to us in hindsight. Could it be they had all been too gullible when God said "This is best"? Had they all been taken advantage of? Lucifer claimed that all he wanted was the right to look out for his own best interests, and he wanted the same for all the others. What could be wrong with that?

On the other hand, it certainly looked like God had been taking care of His *own* best interests.... *Who* held absolute authority? *Who* owned *everything in the universe*? *Who* was the *sole object* of everyone else's worship?

Of course, God denied all these accusations. And Lucifer responded with the obvious claim: "You're lying, God." (#9)

Such direct insubordination demonstrated a clear line of distinction between the rebellious angels and those who still trusted God. Expelling the rebels from heaven was now at least a *definable* course of action. But many questions remained, the most fundamental of which was whether or not God's actions were arbitrary. This matter of expulsion, for instance: Was there a *reason* for drawing the line when God had drawn it? Or had He just finally said, "Enough already!"?

19. *Desire of Ages*, 37

20. I put the word in scare quotes because, as we will see, there is no real logic to the argument.

At the time, explanations were scarce, and full proof a long ways off. What was perplexity and a test of faith for the faithful angels, has been largely revealed to us. It may still test our faith, of course, but if we trust, a great many perplexities concerning sin and God's response to it begin to fade away:

Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him.<sup>21</sup>

The party that rebelled in heaven had.... intelligence, the greatest intelligence. They did not lose their intelligence all at once. But they had not the power, the connection with God, the power of discernment, to understand that if they repented, they could be brought back again.<sup>22</sup>

"Discernment" and "understanding," it would appear, are important—and Lucifer et al. had destroyed their own capacity. God was not at fault, nor had He acted arbitrarily. The rebels, themselves, had ruled out the one chance they had of being "brought back."

Following Lucifer's eviction, of course, we have the familiar events of the creation of our earth—including human beings—and the eventual introduction of sin. That created a second group of sinners, much smaller in number, but universally significant, nonetheless. Countless unfallen beings watched to see what would become of them.

For the sake of argument, Lucifer advocated "a theory of justice inconsistent with mercy." This was a "merciless justice..., a counterfeit of justice, abhorrent to God."<sup>23</sup> In this, Satan managed to stir up confusion for a time, but the whole approach was flawed by his overlooking one immensely important detail:

Even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.<sup>24</sup>

On that one avenue of hope—a knowledge of God's love—rested the eternal destiny of the human race.

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21. *Desire of Ages*, 761

22. Manuscript 80, 1910

23. Letter 16a, 1892

This "law and order Lucifer" was entirely a matter of tactical maneuvering. This will be dealt with on page 25.

24. *Desire of Ages*, 761

## Scene 2

# Christ

FACED with the charge of high crimes and misdemeanors, the government of heaven had to respond. It was a bigger problem than we might recognize.

How shall the universe know that Lucifer is not a safe and just leader? To their eyes he appears right. They cannot see, as God sees, beneath the outward covering. They cannot know as God knows. Then to work to unmask him... would create a state of things which must be avoided.<sup>1</sup>

Two points to note: the universe thought Lucifer looked good! And this matter of perception complicated God's efforts to set the record straight.

Satan had disguised himself in a cloak of falsehood, and for a time it was impossible to tear off the covering, so that the hideous deformity of his character could be seen. He must be left to reveal himself in his cruel, artful, wicked works.<sup>2</sup>

OK, the aforementioned "complication" just got upgraded to "impossible." Fortunately, this is qualified by the prepositional phrase "for a time." In other words, things will get better eventually. But note, the time needed was all but beyond God's control. Satan "must be left to reveal himself." The Lord's commitment to free will—even for His archenemy—is nothing less than astounding!

In this next statement, we get an itemized list of the needed developments in moving toward eternal security:

God's purpose [was] to place things upon an eternal basis of security. Time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his government. The heavenly universe must see worked out the principles which Satan declared were superior to God's principles. God's order must be contrasted with Satan's order. The corrupting principles of Satan's rule must be revealed. The principles of righteousness expressed in God's law must be demonstrated as unchangeable, perfect, eternal.<sup>3</sup>

Now, take a moment and notice the five uses of the word "must." Every one of them involves some manifestation of reality, some disclosing of information. This is impor-

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1. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister C.H. Jones, July 4, 1892; Letter 16a, 1892

2. *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, 319

3. *Review and Herald*, September 7, 1897

tant, because if producing evidence is God's first step toward solving this problem, it behooves us to examine the evidence if we want to be a part of the solution.

The public portrayal of Lucifer and his principles, as contrasted with God and His principles, is the central core of God's whole strategy in the great controversy. For us, it's hard to see all that clearly. It's natural to focus on what we can see, rather than see past to "Him who is invisible."<sup>4</sup> But not so with the rest of the universe. Though their view of the matter was also clouded, they took in the greater scope of the issue, and saw aspects which were entirely beyond our frame of reference:

There was not an angel but desired to look into the mystery of man's redemption, through all the difficulties which seemed to surround it. All heaven saw the great and wonderful plan, so large as to compass the whole earth, and so deeply laid that the strength of satanic agencies could not prevail against it...

The conflict was not merely between God and man; every creature that God had created was involved in the conflict. The unfallen worlds saw that the character of God could be vindicated only through this trial and conflict of the two forces. The attributes of God must be made to appear. Of the stability of His government there must be no question.<sup>5</sup>

And so the plan that had been in place "from the beginning of the ages,"<sup>6</sup> "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages,"<sup>7</sup> was called up and put in play. Surprisingly, it called for a 4,000 year delay before the definitive response. When that response finally came, it had a laser-like focus that we dare not miss or underestimate.

## Jesus' Mission

The great object that brought Christ to the earth was to reveal the Father.<sup>8</sup>

"God is love." This was the great truth that Christ came to the world to reveal... The object of Christ's mission to the world was to reveal the Father.<sup>9</sup>

Christ came to this world for no other purpose than to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power.<sup>10</sup>

Ellen White says this so often, that it's easy to take it for granted. Fortunately, Jesus did not let any carelessness slip into His performance of this task.

God... sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.<sup>11</sup>

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

Some jobs require close attention to detail!

4. Hebrews 11:27

5. *Youth's Instructor*, April 15, 1897

6. Ephesians 3:9

7. 1 Corinthians 2:7

8. *Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1895

9. *Signs of the Times*, April 11, 1895

10. E.G. White, Letter to O.A. Olson, August 25, 1896; Letter 87, 1896

11. E.G. White, Letter to J.E. White, November 16, 1903; Letter 250, 1903

12. E.G. White, "A Personal God," October 14, 1903; Manuscript 124, 1903

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to Him the praise, and giving to Him the credit, of the whole purpose of His own mission on earth—to set men right through the revelation of God.... When the object of His mission was attained—the revelation of God to the world—the Son of God announced that His work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.<sup>13</sup>

This last paragraph has a lot to digest. For starters, notice the specification that she is talking about “the *whole purpose*” of Christ’s mission on earth.” In other words, this is not some side issue, some inconsequential matter—this is the “whole purpose.”

So now we know that it’s important, but what is “it”? Not content to leave the question unresolved, she specifies twice that Christ’s mission was “the revelation of God.” This is in keeping with what we saw to be the Lord’s method of moving toward “an eternal basis of security.” This desirable goal is not reached through some application of superstitious magic. No, it comes by way of the revelation of reality. Remember?

The character of God could be vindicated only through this trial and conflict of the two forces. The attributes of God must be made to appear.

But the paragraph says more! This revelation is not simply a matter of setting the record straight; it’s a means to an end, a tool in the hands of God to produce a particular result. What’s more, this result is of the utmost importance to us:

To set men right through the revelation of God.

This is noteworthy, for we seldom consider the cause-and-effect role of this revelation.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Christendom generally declares that this “setting right” of sinners was accomplished by the mere fact of the death of Christ, not through the revelation of the Father. And yet, the cross was clearly a life-changing revelation, not just an “event”:

When the object of His mission was attained—the revelation of God to the world—the Son of God announced that His work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.

Again, we have the mission of Christ identified as the revelation of God to the world, but more than that, we have an indication of *when* it was accomplished, *when* “the character of the Father was made manifest to men.” As if to make sure no one missed the connection, Jesus Himself announced that this work was done, that the revelation was complete. “It is finished,” He said, because a revelation of divine love could never be complete without the sacrifice of the cross.

There was no other way by which man could be brought into harmony with His unchangeable law, save by the death of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

The only plan that could be devised to save the human race was that which called for the incarnation, humiliation, and crucifixion of the Son of God, the Majesty of heaven.<sup>16</sup>

13. *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890

14. Indeed, you may test yourself on this point by looking back to page 11, reference 10: Did you notice the thought “that man might be uplifted by its restoring power”?

15. *Signs of the Times*, September 2, 1889

16. *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890

The death of Jesus Christ was a means to an end. The most powerful and efficacious provision that He could give to our world, was the means; the end was the glory of God in the uplifting, refining, ennobling of the human agent.<sup>17</sup>

## When Words Fail

All of which brings us back to the need to reveal the Father to all the universe as well as to mankind. Note the word: *reveal*. At its heart, a revelation is something you can see, and it turns out there's good reason for that.

No verbal description could reveal God to the world. Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God himself must be revealed to humanity.<sup>18</sup>

Jesus could not express in words to the understanding of man the love of the Father.... But He did express the love of God in His actions.<sup>19</sup>

“Actions” can be seen. They speak louder than words. That’s not to say that words are necessarily bad. It’s just that words alone “could not express... to the understanding of man the love of the Father.” Simply put, that means that words—preaching and teaching—were an adjunct to the more central work of Christ’s revelation. In that light, this makes perfect sense:

The Saviour of the world devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching.<sup>20</sup>

Jesus knew how to get the most bang for His buck. He did preach, of course. The sermon on the mount, the parables... they were all good. It’s just that He could accomplish more in other ways. His words, them, served to deepen the primary impression of His actions. Speaking specifically of the sermon on the mount, Ellen White said this:

Christ lived every phase of that sermon before He gave it to His hearers. The Beatitudes represent His deeds.<sup>21</sup>

Christ’s sermon on the mount contains lessons which Jesus Himself had lived and acted before He commenced His instruction to the people.<sup>22</sup>

So let’s not give up on words. They have their place, but only if they can truthfully point back to the greater revelation of godly actions.

What we’ve seen in our look at the life of Christ may be boiled down to a very simple formula: He came to reveal the Father, and this necessitated more than words. This revelation required that He “express the love of God in His actions,” culminating in His death on the cross. Only then could He claim that His mission was finished. Ellen White sums this all up nicely:

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17. E.G. White, Letter to Edgar Caro, October 2, 1893; Letter 17a, 1893

18. *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895

19. *Signs of the Times*, November 28, 1892

20. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 225

21. E.G. White, Letter to J.E. and Emma White, November 16, 1894; Letter 81, 1894

22. E.G. White, “The Avondale School Farm,” September 14, 1898; Manuscript 115, 1898

In all His ministry, all His self-denial and self-sacrifice, Christ's object was to reveal God to the world.<sup>23</sup>

It will be helpful for later in this booklet, to make special note now of those twin elements, "self-denial and self-sacrifice."

## But Wait! There's More!

There are many different kinds of "actions" which might reveal the character of God. No doubt Christ used many—maybe all—of them, but there was one category which He chose more than any other. There's a reason for that. It turns out that healing the sick not only demonstrated the character of His Father, it also illustrated the forgiveness of sin. That's a really important point, more so than we tend to realize.

The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and of physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together.<sup>24</sup>

The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin....

In the healing of the paralytic at Capernaum, Christ again taught the same truth. It was to manifest His power to forgive sins that the miracle was performed.<sup>25</sup>

What we commonly overlook in this regard is that healing is never based on someone's "say-so." A judge may slam his gavel and say "Case dismissed," but doctors don't have that luxury. The first is an arbitrary enactment, the second is encumbered with the reality of cells, biology, and chemistry. For Jesus to "forgive" someone of leprosy took more than words, and the end result had to pass the inspection of the priests, if the leper were to ever be allowed to rejoin his family. There are lessons here....

## The Challenge Remains

We have spent quite a bit of time on Christ's mission, and the primary method of prosecuting it. There is danger in this, for we are prone to look at the life and ministry of Christ through the rather narrow lens of concern for ourselves. In other words, we often think that Jesus came for no other reason than the salvation of human beings. This narrow focus steals from us the full appreciation of the broader scope of the great controversy.

True enough, the "plan of salvation" and the "great controversy" are inextricably intertwined... but they're not the same thing, and the one is much larger than the other! So, to show that we haven't lost our way in this discussion, let's consider this:

[Christ's] life of sinlessness, lived on this earth in human nature, is a complete refutation of Satan's charge against the character of God.<sup>26</sup>

23. E.G. White, Letter to J. Washburn, W.W. Prescott, A.G. Daniells, W.A. Colcord, January 16, 1906; Letter 58, 1906

24. *Ministry of Healing*, 111

25. *Desire of Ages*, 266–267

26. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister S.N. Haskell, January 18, 1902; Letter 1, 1902

Ah yes... Satan's charge against the character of God. That's what we were looking at, isn't it? So let's look again, but this time from the vantage point of the unfallen universe, before and after the pivot point of eternity—the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. First, the “before” snapshot:

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion.<sup>27</sup>

And now the “after”:

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.<sup>28</sup>

How could it take so long to recognize that Satan was a murderer? What about Cain and Abel? Didn't that count for anything? How many hundreds (thousands? millions?) of murders had been committed in the four millennia since creation? How tricky can this be, that the “universe” should be so slow to catch on?<sup>29</sup>

And yet the answer is right in front of us. There is a categorical difference between all those murders and “shedding the blood of the Son of God.” *Jesus hadn't sinned.* For the first and only time in all history past or future, an innocent being died.

Why did that matter? Did one more murder really make any difference? And how had Satan managed to avoid the blame for so many previous murders?

The key point is, it was *God's law* that defined the wages of sin.

Satan had all along had the perfect dodge. In effect, he could tell the universe, “Hey, don't blame me. I'm not actually in favor of God's law on this point. Remember? I told Him to change it. You can blame me for killing Abel if you want, but it was nothing more than what God said had to happen.”

And with that argument, Satan avoided the charge of murder. Until the cross, that is. Then he went too far, and all the universe saw what had not been apparent before.

The holy angels were horror-stricken that one of their number could fall so far as to be capable of such cruelty as had been manifested toward the Son of God on Calvary. Every sentiment of pity and sympathy which they had ever felt for Satan in his exile was quenched in their hearts. That his envy should be manifested in such a revenge upon an innocent person was enough to strip him of his assumed robe of celestial light, and to reveal the hideous deformity beneath; but to manifest such malignity toward the divine Son of God... was such a heinous crime against Heaven that

27. *Desire of Ages*, 758

28. *Desire of Ages*, 761

29. “The universe” may have been a bit slow on this point, but Satan may have been even a bit further behind: “As Satan was triumphing in His death, it was not long before he found out he had overstepped the boundary.” E.G. White, “Sermon: Christ and the Law,” June 19, 1889; Manuscript 5, 1889

it caused the angels to shudder with horror, and severed the last tie of sympathy existing between Satan and the heavenly world.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of this is not the effect of the revelation of the characters of both God and Satan at the cross, but the implication that—even until the crucifixion—there were angels that apparently still had “sympathies” for Lucifer. These were “holy angels”! How could that be?

Simply put, the confusion sown by Lucifer hadn’t yet been entirely dissipated. Confused angels, sympathetic to Satan, yet loyal to God. Is that even possible? How could it be? Would God even allow that?

Well, the answer to that last question is simple: He obviously did. For four thousand years, the angels of heaven resisted doubts they could not completely dismiss. How? Through faith in God. “Walking by faith” is the only thing that works when “walking by sight” is not an option. That’s true for angels; that’s true for us. And for both groups, it is only the demonstration of the cross that anchors that faith:

The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.<sup>31</sup>

While this statement speaks of the crucifixion as an accomplished fact, *something* “guarded... the angels of heaven... from apostasy” for four millennia prior to the cross. That *something* was “faith.” The “righteousness” of the holy angels was “righteousness by faith,” just as surely as was Abraham’s, for the simple reason that faith in God is the only thing that *ever* produces righteousness in created beings.

## A Look at the Scoreboard

But let’s get back to those accusations. We’ll take them one at a time.

1. Angels are holy by nature and wise enough to govern themselves, so they don’t need God’s law.

It was angels who had just arranged the crucifixion of Christ; to claim that holiness and wisdom were irrevocably inherent in angelic nature simply didn’t work any more.

2. God was unfair when He exalted Jesus above Lucifer.

This is based on the notion that Christ and Lucifer were, more or less, equal. Maybe they each had their own unique strengths, but at the end of the day, Lucifer said, he was the better choice. Well, Christ and Satan had just met at Calvary, and there were no more illusions of equality or interchangeability. This argument was dead.

30. *Signs of the Times*, September 23, 1889

31. *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889

3. God is selfish.

After the cross? Lucifer? You're going to make this claim after the cross?

4. God is unforgiving and revengeful.

Same answer.... Lucifer, this is foolishness.

5. God's law is defective, and needs to be changed.

The only "reason" given for this accusation was claim number six, so let's go there.

6. It is impossible to obey God's law.

When someone tells you that "such-and-such" is impossible, there is nothing so satisfying as proving them wrong by simply doing it. Jesus had done it. This argument was dead, and it took number five to the grave as well.

So far, so good. Two thirds of Satan's accusations were clearly reduced to philosophical rubble. Unexpectedly perhaps—and for reasons which we'll cover later—the final three accusations remain. To this very day. And that's a problem. It is, in fact, *our problem*, and it's hard to see how ignoring it can help.

7. God's law is arbitrary.

8. God's law makes forgiveness impossible.

9. God is lying about all the above.

But there's good news. The first such point is that God's truthfulness has already been established on the first six of Lucifer's claims; when the same is done for seven and eight, accusation nine just goes away. Now we're down to just two charges, and the good news there is that God has a plan for dealing with them. We'll get to that in due time, but by way of a partial introduction to that matter, consider this:

Every eye in the unfallen universe is bent upon those who profess to be Christ's followers. Here, in this atom of a world, an earnest warfare is going on—a battle in which Christ, our substitute and surety, has engaged in our behalf, and conquered....

Stop. Look. *Think*.

There's something odd here. Christ is clearly the One whose accomplishments are noteworthy. And yet, the universe is watching His followers. That's us. Why would they be watching *us*? Jesus did the cool stuff; our record has been just a sickening comedy of errors (and how much comedy is there in untold sorrow and suffering?).

You'd think the universe would switch channels.... But the paragraph continues:

Now we, Christ's purchased possession, must become soldiers of His cross, and conquer in our own behalf, on our own account, through the power and wisdom given us from above. The influence of the cross of Calvary is to vanquish every earthly and spiritual evil power; and we need to know the plan of the battle, that we may work in harmony with Christ.<sup>32</sup>

Don't touch that dial.

32. *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1891

## Scene 3

# By Way of Illustration...

**I**N October, 1888, the most famous of all General Conference sessions began in Minneapolis. The occasion is well known and well studied in connection to the “message of righteousness by faith.” Much has been written of the occasion and the ensuing era, but our interest is a largely overlooked detail.

After the meeting at Minneapolis, Dr. Kellogg was a converted man, and we all knew it. We could see the converting power of God working in his heart and life.<sup>1</sup>

This was monumental, for it precipitated the rise and fall of John Harvey Kellogg. Space precludes any effort to support the next few observations, so interested readers are encouraged to see my books, *d’Sozo* and *Tactics*, for documentation. Suffice it to say that over the next two decades, Dr. Kellogg exemplified in a marked manner, first the principles and practices we have seen in the work of Christ, and later the principles and practices employed by Lucifer in his rebellion.

The story of all this is not insignificant. As a measure of the man’s importance at the time, and of his value as an illustration of the principles at the heart of the great controversy, we might consider the following from Ellen White:

Dr. Kellogg stands where he can do more to relieve the perplexities of the present situation, than any other living man; and, too, he stands where he can do more to bring confusion, perplexity, and backsliding, than any other man living.<sup>2</sup>

The “perplexities of the present situation” were nothing less than the “alpha of apostasy,” the foreshadowing of the “omega apostasy” of the final days. Given Kellogg’s significant role in the “beginning of the loud cry” ten years earlier, the potential for drawing lessons from this modern-day illustration of both sides of the great controversy becomes obvious. The Doctor, for a time, demonstrated the combined ministry of Christ in teaching, preaching, helping, healing. His efforts to persuade the church as a whole to embrace this approach were, sadly, largely rebuffed, and in response, he took up the work of Lucifer, employing virtually every tactic originated by the original apostate. The lessons are legion, but we cannot pursue them at present.

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1. *General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903

2. Ellen White, quoted in W.C. White, Letter to W.S. Sadler, January 20, 1903

## Scene 4

# Time to Move

EVERY general knows there's a time to advance and a time to retreat. Get it right, and he might win the war; get it wrong, and disaster awaits. Uncertainty about the enemy's strength breeds hesitancy; a clear knowledge of his limitations should inspire confidence. We have cause for the latter:

Satan deceives and corrupts the world... but in so doing he is only carrying on his original work. He has introduced no new arguments, he has created no new empire of darkness from which to draw supplies for the furtherance of his deceptions.<sup>1</sup>

It turns out that devilish creativity has limits, and Satan has used up his playbook. There is no reason for us to be catastrophically surprised. Only a tragic unfamiliarity with Lucifer's past course would leave us vulnerable on that account.

When Satan and his rebel host were defeated and cast out of heaven, they did not give up the struggle against right. Satan's work has been the same since the days of Adam to the present, and he has pursued it with great success, tempting men to distrust God's love and to doubt His wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

Notice that the temptation the devil holds out is the same error that destroyed his own soul, the loss of faith in God's love and wisdom. And on the other side of the conflict, there are lessons to be learned as well. The methods to be used at the end of time are the same in principle as used in the previous episodes we've considered.

Christ's method alone will give true success.<sup>3</sup>

We've looked at this already. The revelation of the Father's character was the all-absorbing theme of Jesus' work for one simple reason: that's what was needed! A couple of millennia, it turns out, hasn't changed much.

The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

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1. *Signs of the Times*, April 28, 1890

2. E.G. White, "That They All Might Be One," 1909; Manuscript 11, 1909

3. *Ministry of Healing*, 143

4. *Ministry of Healing*, 143

## That Was Then...

But there is one major difference: Jesus isn't *here*, and that necessarily requires a shift in the Lord's operational plans.

What the world needs today is the light of Christ's example reflected from the lives of Christlike men and women.<sup>5</sup>

Hearts will be captivated—not by the glory of the man, but by the inward adorning of an abiding Christ. It is the revelation of Christ in the man that captivates the hearts of men and women. They behold the beautiful character of Christ, revealed by good works.<sup>6</sup>

Sensibly enough, Christ's method of work is to be our method of work. Yes, *that* method, the only one that gives true success. The one that recognized the limitations of *proclamation*, and held it subservient to the work of *revelation*.

[The] glory of the character of Christ, can never be expressed in words. Human language is inadequate to reveal it. It must be made manifest in the life. It is to be manifest in the individual Christian, in the family, in the church, in the ministry of the word, and in every institution established by God's people.<sup>7</sup>

Christ, the great Medical Missionary, is our example.... He healed the sick and preached the gospel. In His service, healing and teaching were linked closely together. Today they are not to be separated.<sup>8</sup>

The Holy Spirit never has, and never will in the future, divorce the medical missionary work from the gospel ministry. They can not be divorced. Bound up with Jesus Christ, the ministry of the word and the healing of the sick are one.<sup>9</sup>

This last point is worth noting. Ellen White was quite adamant about it:

The Saviour ministered to both the soul and the body. The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and of physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together.<sup>10</sup>

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation when it is interwoven with the practical life, when it is lived and practiced. The union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel.<sup>11</sup>

Notice: "*The true interpretation.*" Not just a true interpretation. Not just one perspective of many. This one is the real deal, and it's true at a level that Ellen White likely knew nothing about—New Testament Greek. The original language testifies to the "oneness," the "interwoven unity" of "the ministry of the word and the healing of the sick" because in the scriptures, both ideas are represented by a single word:

5. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 135

6. E.G. White, Letter to J.H. Kellogg, February 23, 1899; Letter 40, 1899

7. *(Australasian) Union Conference Record*, June 1, 1900

8. *General Conference Bulletin*, June 3, 1909

9. *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, 64

10. *Ministry of Healing*, 111

11. *Review and Herald*, March 4, 1902

## Sozo.

When Gabriel said, “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins,”<sup>12</sup> that word “save” is *sozo*. And when Jesus Himself said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction,” “made you well” is *sozo*.<sup>13</sup> Physical healing and spiritual salvation, the same word. Married, if you will, never to be divorced. No wonder Jesus—

made each work of healing an occasion of implanting in the heart the divine principles of His love and benevolence.

This was the work of Christ: preaching, teaching, helping, healing. And the model holds good to the end of time. The last quotation continues:

Thus His followers are to work. Christ is no longer in this world in person, but He has commissioned us to carry forward the medical missionary work that He began.<sup>14</sup>

God’s purpose in committing to men and women the mission that He committed to Christ is to disentangle His followers from all worldly policy and to give them a work identical with the work that Christ did.<sup>15</sup>

The truth for this time, the third angel’s message, is to be proclaimed with a loud voice—meaning with increasing power—as we approach the great final test. This test must come to the churches in connection with the true...

Notice that this test comes in connection with a *true* something, so that implies that there might be a false, counterfeit version of this thing, but exactly what this thing might be is—so far—unstated. So think for a moment. What might that true thing be?

You are to be forgiven if you’re thinking “The true Sabbath.” It’s not a bad guess... but it’s not what the author wrote in this case. Let’s go back to the quotation:

This test must come to the churches in connection with the true medical missionary work, a work that has the great Physician to dictate and preside in all it comprehends.<sup>16</sup>

God’s final work, which goes on at roughly the same time as this great final test, need not be a mystery. Just like Satan’s deceptions, we’ve seen it all before. It uses the same method that Christ used during His life on earth—the revelation of the character of God. But now it requires that human beings take up the same manner of work that Jesus practiced during His life on earth, for the simple reason that the revelation of God’s character cannot be accomplished through words alone. Acts of mercy and healing are also necessary.

In short, God’s final work is self-sacrifice and self-denial exemplified in preaching, teaching, helping, and healing.

12. Matthew 1:21

13. Mark 5:34

14. *Review and Herald*, May 2, 1912

15. E.G. White, “Christ Our Example in Medical Missionary Work,” October 27, 1902; Manuscript 130, 1902

16. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister S.N. Haskell, August 13, 1900; Letter 121, 1900

## There Will Be Consequences...

Soldiers in the middle of battle should not be surprised if their advancing forces stir up opposition. It's a pretty normal thing. What's not normal is that we see so little of it. Ellen White has an interesting take on our enemy's response, and specifically what it is that will stir things up.

I have been surprised that we have seen so little of the working and manifestation of [Satan's] wrath.... As Lucifer sees that we are making efforts to work the cities as if we meant to give the last message, his wrath will be aroused, and he will employ every device in his power to hinder the work.<sup>17</sup>

What do you suppose she meant by "as if we meant to"? What would that look like? What would it look like if we *didn't* really mean to give the last message? And why does she mention cities, in particular? Maybe this comment is related to all this:

Medical missionary work is to be carried forward with an earnestness with which it has never yet been carried. This work is the door through which the truth is to find entrance to the large cities.<sup>18</sup>

It's funny. Satan seems kind of panicky about his hold on the large cities. It's easy to look at them and think that they are hopelessly saturated with sin... and that's no doubt true on the whole. But cities aren't saved; people are saved, and Satan knows he has a huge number of unhappy customers in those cities. Let them get a look at something better than they now know, and who's to say what could happen?

Consequently, "his wrath will be aroused, and he will employ every device in his power to hinder the work." And that brings up an interesting possibility that presents itself right at this point. Back in 1892, the preaching of Jones and Waggoner was combined with the practical "good works" of John Kellogg, and the result was the beginning of the loud cry. It was only a beginning... nothing huge, except for the potential of that line of evangelistic outreach.

Truth be told, the loud cry was pretty quiet still. It certainly hadn't shown up on the front page of the *New York Times*, or any other paper, for that matter. If Ellen White hadn't written that it had begun, there's no reason to suspect that any other Seventh-day Adventist would have thought so. And yet, *it had!*

Consider the last eight years or so. Have you seen an increase in medical evangelism? Have you heard of—or better yet, taken part in—the Your Best Pathway to Health mega-clinics?<sup>19</sup> Oakland, San Francisco, San Antonio, Spokane, Los Angeles,

17. E.G. White, Letter to G.W. Amadon, September 12, 1910; Letter 74, 1910

18. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 167

19. Mention should be made of the AMEN Clinics as well. These are smaller versions of the same idea, tailored to more local needs and circumstances. There have been dozens of these in recent years, all lending their influence to the work. The mega-clinics and the smaller clinics both have their role in the work. The one leverages its size and more specialized expertise to draw attention to the Lord's work in the higher circles of government and industry; the other leverages its more local participants to provide a more long-range follow-on influence.

Beckley, Phoenix, Fort Worth.... Those are *cities*. And that was millions of dollars of freely provided medical missionary work! Optical, dental, general medicine, pediatrics, surgery, lifestyle counseling, massage, hair cuts, clothes, personal prayers, and bags full of literature covering the whole gamut of health and spiritual need—together it all garnered very positive coverage on metropolitan and national news broadcasts.

Of course, if you've been following the story, you'll know that "Indianapolis" was scheduled for 2020, but it didn't happen. Why? Because there was a pandemic.

Did that just happen along? Or is that perhaps one of Satan's "devices to hinder the work"? And if medical missionary work (under whatever name) was producing that kind of response in our day, is it possible that the loud cry may have begun again? We don't have a prophet on hand to define such things, but doesn't it fit the picture?

But this is no time to congratulate ourselves as if we've done something great. We should be happy if we simply manage to get something *right!* There's so much still undone, that now is no time to become complacent. Nor is it time to think that our work is finished. We need to resist the tendency to look at the mess the world's in, and think that that will somehow excuse us from the work God called *us* to do. No, it doesn't take away the work, it just makes it harder! The plan is still there, and we need to follow directions *as if we meant to give the last message*. Free-lancing on the design of the Lord's work is a very, very bad idea:

When men begin to weave in the human threads to compose the pattern of the web, the Lord is in no hurry. He waits until men shall lay down their own human inventions and will accept the Lord's way and the Lord's will.<sup>20</sup>

## Why So Fussy?

Do you ever wonder why God is so particular? Why should there be only one "true interpretation of the gospel"? On any given Sunday morning, you can tune in at least a dozen versions of the gospel on TV... why can't God be a bit more broad-minded? Why can't we just do things our own way for a change?

Well, the truth is... we can! Lucifer did, and God hasn't changed the rules on us. Free will is still a thing. But natural results are a thing, too, so we need to choose wisely. If "Christ's method alone will give true success," how foolish do we have to be to try something else? Or do we think God made a mistake, just this once? Or maybe He doesn't really *want* what's best for us?

*Wait a minute... do I hear an echo?*

Much to the devil's delight, our rebellion is almost never anything new; we just keep recycling our way through Lucifer's first six complaints. Yeah... the ones that the rest of the universe threw out a couple thousand years ago. But let's break that mold. It's time to take on Satan's final three claims, his last ditch wishful thinking. This army needs to move.

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20. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister J.A. Burden, July 29, 1901; Letter 181, 1901

## Scene 5

# Curtain Down

**I**N recent years, as the “greatest generation” passes away, commemorations of D-Day have become more poignant. History is worth remembering. But imagine for a moment that those commemorations allowed a defeated enemy to offer live-fire resistance. Machine guns raining death on the beaches. Land mines set to detonate in the sand. That sort of thing.

Would it not be utterly pointless? After all, *that* war is over. Even the most oxymoronic “military intelligence” would know better.

As we saw back on page 17, Christ has conquered. In this case though, the war as a whole is not over. Some battles have been decided, but others remain. Since this war doesn’t concern itself with geography, per se, we can’t look on a map to see where the battle lines are; we have to identify the issues at stake, and look at them.

Of the original nine criticisms Lucifer lodged against the government of heaven, we’ve seen that six were refuted by the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ. Tragically, we have too often re-staged those battles, fighting them ourselves rather than recognizing that victory has been won. Such fighting, by the way, has far too often ended in disheartening defeat.

But even when we acknowledge Christ’s triumph over Satan and appropriate to ourselves the victory He won in our behalf, there are battles still to be fought and won. The statement said—

Now we, Christ’s purchased possession, must become soldiers of His cross, and conquer in our own behalf, on our own account, through the power and wisdom given us from above. The influence of the cross of Calvary is to vanquish every earthly and spiritual evil power; and we need to know the plan of the battle, that we may work in harmony with Christ.<sup>1</sup>

We will, of course, continue to be attacked on our faith in the love and wisdom of God, but there are further conquests to be gained. The issues in play here are not new. They are not surprising. If anything, they are simply “unrecognized and neglected.” That’s clearly no way to win this war, so let’s look at Satan’s remaining accusations:

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1. *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1891

7. God's law is arbitrary.
8. God's law makes forgiveness impossible.
9. God is lying about all the above.

Since the issue in the seventh accusation has received so little recognition, it's no wonder the "plan of the battle" remains indistinct in our minds.

As previously noted, the eighth charge is a metaphorical right hook to the left jab of the seventh. Satan has bet his very existence on the idea that when God tries to avoid defeat on the seventh accusation, He will leave Himself open to defeat by means of the eighth. In other words, an arbitrary law is easy to change, but God claims His law isn't arbitrary, thus placing it beyond His own control. So then, if God can't control the application of His law, forgiveness becomes impossible, or—at the very least—unjust.

Now do you see the point of Paul's claim?

That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Either one is relatively easy; doing both is incredibly difficult. Satan says it can't be done; God says it can. And we need to know the plan of the battle.

## Fighting Dirty

We can get a glimpse of how fundamental this is, from an event long ago. Shortly after the creation of our earth—

[Satan laid his] plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could, in any way, beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would be in a fair way to share with them of God's mercy.<sup>3</sup>

It was Satan's design that the state of man should be the same with that of the fallen angels in rebellion against God, uncheered by a gleam of hope. He reasoned that if God pardoned sinful man whom he had created, he would also pardon and receive into favor him and his angels. But he was disappointed.<sup>4</sup>

"Disappointed" is classic understatement. It would be no exaggeration to bump that up to "enraged," "infuriated," or maybe "driven completely past the brink of sanity into a permanent homicidal frenzy."

It played out like this: Satan had some sense of how much God loved human beings. He "just knew" God would find a way to forgive them. Thus far, he was right. But he jumped the rails when he assumed that "forgiveness" would require a change in the law. As he saw it, God was stuck: change the law to save Adam and Eve, or admit that forgiveness was impossible. Either way, Satan would win, because God had denied both claims! Brilliant!

But God didn't follow that script.

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2. Romans 3:26

3. *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, 29–30

4. *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874

It's important for us to understand how vital these claims are to Satan. They are all that stand between him and total failure. Given the sort of reciprocal relationship between the seventh and eighth accusations, it should be no surprise to find that as soon as he begins to lose ground on seven, he will jump to number eight. And that's exactly the way Ellen White describes the crucial point at the end of time:

[Satan] numbers the world as his subjects; but the little company who keep the commandments of God are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. He sees that holy angels are guarding them, and he infers that their sins have been pardoned; but he does not know that their cases have been decided in the sanctuary above. He has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit, and he presents these before God in the most exaggerated light, representing this people to be just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. He declares that the Lord cannot in justice forgive their sins and yet destroy him and his angels. He claims them as his prey and demands that they be given into his hands to destroy.<sup>5</sup>

“Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Thy throne will not stand in righteousness and judgment. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them.”<sup>6</sup>

Does Satan really want all sinners to be destroyed? Not much! But he's willing to argue any angle to try and prove God wrong.

OK... that seems likely... but... *is it really fair* for God to save some sinners, but not others? To offer salvation to sinful humans, but not to sinful angels?

The answer to that hinges on how we think “salvation” works. Remember *sozo*? Remember how Jesus illustrated His work of salvation through His works of healing?

The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and of physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together.<sup>7</sup>

The miracle Jesus had performed in feeding the multitude, furnished him a forcible figure by which to illustrate His work upon earth. He declared that, as temporal bread imparts health and strength to the body, so will faith in Christ, and obedience to His teachings, give spiritual vigor to the soul, and life everlasting.<sup>8</sup>

This is not to say that “perfect health habits” (let alone some crazy new fad diet) will automatically produce a “perfect person.” There is no “salvation by physical fitness.” But the process of healing illustrates the process of forgiveness! It turns out that “faith in Christ, and obedience to His teachings” is a force rooted in reality, not in an arbitrary decree. The choice to maintain faith (what Lucifer lost, and the “confused-but-still-holy” angels retained) has a notable cause-and-effect result. It gives “spiritual vigor to the soul, and life everlasting.” And it demonstrates something very important:

5. *Great Controversy*, 618

6. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 474

7. *Ministry of Healing*, 111

8. *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, 282

## Touché

In the character of God's people a living testimony will be borne that will contradict the fallacy of Satan, who has declared that the law of Jehovah is arbitrary, and holds its subjects under a cruel bondage.<sup>9</sup>

The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the results of obedience to right principles.<sup>10</sup>

Through the natural effect of faith and obedience, God proves two things:

1. the workings of His law are natural to the core,<sup>11</sup> and
2. it is, indeed, both possible and just to treat a person who is wholly recovered as if he was not sick.<sup>12</sup>

When this finally happens, accusations seven, eight, *and* nine go down in flames. Lucifer is out of ammunition, and the entire universe (except for sinful human beings, who are lagging behind a bit in figuring things out) recognizes that—despite another thousand years of necessary mop-up exercises—it's game over.

And when it's over, it's *over*. Not because God says, "I'm tired of that game, let's play something else." It's over because of a new reality, because something has been done that wasn't done before.

A tested and proved creation will never again be turned from allegiance to Him whose character has been fully manifested before them as fathomless love and infinite wisdom.<sup>13</sup>

Is there any reason to be surprised that what secures "eternal security" for the universe happens to address the exact issues Lucifer stumbled over?

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9. *Review and Herald*, August 13, 1895

10. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 296

11. The death knell for accusation #7.

12. Ditto for #8.

13. *Great Controversy*, 504

## Scene 6

# Getting There from Here

THE devil is not stupid. Having at least some grasp of the power of “faith in Christ and obedience to His teachings,” he desires to keep us as far away from that danger zone as possible. Which is a pretty good explanation of why there are a dozen different versions of the gospel on TV every Sunday. Much of Satan’s counter-attack is focused on obscuring an idea we’ve seen a couple times already, that of conquering “in our own behalf, on our own account.”

This is a tricky topic, because it’s easy to misrepresent the real idea. That little snippet of a quotation at the end of the first paragraph, for instance, already presents a risk, because it left off some important ideas. The original sentence actually specifies that this process is to be accomplished “through the power and wisdom given us from above.” With just that much, we’ve moved quite a ways from any pretensions to self-sufficiency. But would you have known that if all you saw was the first snippet? It’s tricky...

Let’s start with this:

God desires everyone to understand the hateful character of selfishness and to co-operate with Him in guarding His human family against its terrible, deceptive power. The first result of the entrance of sin into the world was the birth of principles of selfishness. The design of the gospel is, by means of remedial missionary work, to confront this evil of selfishness and destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence.<sup>1</sup>

So selfishness is bad, but God has a remedial plan to confront it. Great. But wait a minute. This “remedy”... where is it being applied? It’s first of all aimed at the hearts of those who are doing the “missionary work.” Now if the destruction of selfishness manages to flow on out to the world at large, that’s a good thing, too. But it starts with us.

Given that we were told “We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work”<sup>2</sup> back in 1892, and told “soon

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1. E.G. White, Letter to Brethren and Sisters of the Iowa Conference, November 6, 1901; Letter 165, 1901

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 62

there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work”<sup>3</sup> in 1901, it’s safe to say that this “remedial missionary work” is going to be a blended work of preaching, teaching, helping, healing. We get a glimpse of this here:

Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times.... The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit.... Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.<sup>4</sup>

What do you suppose “primitive godliness” looks like? That’s important, because there’s a counterfeit coming. If we think primitive godliness means just “doctrinal purity,” our efforts to identify the counterfeit will focus on nothing but theology. That’s a problem, because “apostolic times” are tied to more than theology:

Search heaven and earth, and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is made manifest in works of mercy to those who need our sympathy and aid. This is the truth as it is in Jesus. When those who profess the name of Christ shall practice the principles of the golden rule, the same power will attend the gospel as in apostolic times.<sup>5</sup>

So, what does “primitive godliness” look like? Works of mercy, the golden rule. In other words, medical missionary work. And what would a counterfeit of that look like? *Medical missionary work*. Anything else would be like trying to pass off Monopoly money as the real thing.

The idea of a satanic counterfeit at the end of time is not new to us, but we usually jump all the way down to the end of the war.

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ.... In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: “Christ has come! Christ has come!”<sup>6</sup>

The problem with skipping everything in between is that we can get a very distorted view of coming events. For instance, we have often read the following and thought only of Sabbath/Sunday issues, or maybe the state of the dead.

The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.<sup>7</sup>

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3. *General Conference Bulletin*, April 12, 1901

4. *Great Controversy*, 464

5. *Mount of Blessing*, 137

6. *Great Controversy*, 624

7. *Great Controversy*, 593

Does it apply to Sabbath/Sunday. Of course it does. Does it apply exclusively to Sabbath/Sunday? Does it apply exclusively to abstract theology? No.

And that takes us back to the omega of apostasy. The issues that were deceiving souls back in Kellogg's day are back again. But more so, because the alpha was cut short in its development; the omega on the other hand, will reach full growth. Much as Christ did in Matthew 24, Ellen White sometimes blended events of her day with the complete development yet to come. Here's one example:

The light is given to me... that these sophistries, and this mysticism, and doing away with the personality of God, and with the personality of Christ, will get the hall-room of the heart all ready for these miracles that Satan will come to work right in our midst.<sup>8</sup>

This is a reference to the mysticism of pantheism (a philosophy we are seeing a lot more of these days), but for the moment our focus will be on the miracles that the pantheism prepares the way for.

Wonderful scenes, with which Satan will be closely connected, will soon take place. God's Word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test. Many who have had great light will fail to walk in the light, because they have not become one with Christ. His instruction is not palatable to them.<sup>9</sup>

Catch the details here. Miracles end up testing Adventists. *"Wow! Those must be really tricky miracles!"* Well, yeah, they probably are, but there's another aspect that will likely determine our fate even before the first miraculous healing casts a shadow on our doorstep.

Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived,...

This is huge. It's a counterfeit, and it's certainly one that can only be tested by the scriptures. But notice who it deceives! "Those who are willing to be deceived." Now that seems really weird. Who would possibly be "willing to be deceived"? Certainly not a Seventh-day Adventist! But there are dots at the end of the quotation. There's something more to come.

Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived, who desire to shun the self-denial and sacrifice demanded by the truth.<sup>10</sup>

*"What do self-denial and sacrifice have to do with a counterfeit anything? I know all about Satan impersonating Christ. I've had that straight for years. The real Jesus doesn't touch the ground. What's so hard about that?"*

8. E.G. White, "Sermon: Thoughts on 2 Peter 1," March 24, 1906; Manuscript 138, 1906

9. E.G. White, Letter to Brethren Laboring in Battle Creek, November 1903; Letter 275, 1903

10. *Great Controversy*, 528

Oh dear... If that's the preparation we've got, trouble is on the horizon. Let's watch it play on out:

The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: 'Christ has come! Christ has come!' The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday.<sup>11</sup>

Here we finally have the Sabbath/Sunday issue. But there's more if you read for details. Satan is *healing* people. He has to! He's trying to look like Jesus!<sup>12</sup> Jesus healed people, so any impostor better do the same.

Satan will come in to deceive if possible the very elect. He claims to be Christ, and he is coming in, pretending to be the great medical missionary.<sup>13</sup>

But this poses a problem for the master of deception. Real medical missionary work is pretty much synonymous with unselfishness, and that doesn't work well with Satan's basic philosophy:

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies. From the beginning of the great controversy he has endeavored to prove God's principles of action to be selfish, and he deals in the same way with all who serve God. To disprove Satan's claim is the work of Christ and of all who bear His name.<sup>14</sup>

So how can anyone make a selfish brand of medical missionary work look like the real thing? There's just too much work, too much patience required. You just can't do it... unless... maybe...

*Miracles! They're the epitome of no fuss, no muss medical missionary work!*

## **There's a Storm a'Coming**

The most detailed description Ellen White ever wrote of the omega, was actually written about the alpha. Or, more accurately, about what the alpha would have grown into if it hadn't been stopped. It's kind of like saying, "This is an acorn. When it grows up, it's going to look like an oak tree."

The full account is well worth studying, but for now we'll skip to the very end of it.

The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worth-

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11. *Great Controversy*, 624

12. By the way, this whole impersonation episode is a weird sort of repetition of Lucifer's claim that he and Christ were pretty much interchangeable back in heaven.

13. *General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903

14. *Education*, 154

less. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.<sup>15</sup>

Ellen White is contrasting the work of the last-day apostasy with the work of God's church. The most significant detail is the final sentence. Do you recognize the allusion? It's a reference to the parable of the two houses, one built on the sand, one on the rock. In the story, a storm comes and stress tests the two structures. One fails, one passes the test. The key point is that, though there are two houses, there is only one storm. It's the same storm. There's no favoritism here. This is simple reality. And "storm and tempest would sweep away the structure" of the omega.

What is that storm? Adventists have come up with a name for it. We call it the little time of trouble. It's a stress test, all right.

In the last scenes of this earth's history, war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague, and famine. The waters of the deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood.<sup>16</sup>

Perilous times are before us. The whole world will be involved in perplexity and distress, disease of every kind will be upon the human family, and such ignorance as now prevails concerning the laws of health would result in great suffering and the loss of many lives that might be saved.<sup>17</sup>

This man wants his own way; the next man wants his own way. Every man's hand will be against his fellow man. Brother will rise against brother, sister against sister, parents against children, and children against parents. All will be in confusion. Relatives will betray one another. There will be secret plotting to destroy life. Destruction, misery, and death will be seen on every hand.<sup>18</sup>

All this, combined, will test the foundations of the two houses. One will fall, one will stand. Here's why:

The very foundation of [Christ's] mission was self-denial, self-sacrifice.<sup>19</sup>

Selfishness lies at the foundation of all sin.<sup>20</sup>

As health systems buckle, financial networks crack, shipping and supply chains break down, and general purpose decency comes to be seen as a fatal weakness, the world's brand of humanitarian service is swept away by the tempest. It simply comes to the point that the selfish heart says, "I've only got enough food (or clothing, money, firewood, gasoline, or whatever) for one of us, and it's not going to you!"

On the other hand, God's church—now much smaller in number but purer in heart—faces the same storm, and is battered by the same shortages. Resources reduced to nothing, they nonetheless continue to serve. *Their* bread and water is sure; it's everyone

15. *Selected Messages*, Book One, 205

16. *Review and Herald*, October 19, 1897

17. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister Kellogg, September 16, 1892; Letter 34, 1892

18. E.G. White, Letter to J.H. Kellogg, January 28, 1901; Letter 20, 1901

19. E.G. White, Letter to Brethren and Sisters, August 3, 1892; Letter 2b, 1892

20. E.G. White, "Victory Over Temptation," October 31, 1899; Manuscript 153, 1899

else who needs help. And like the disciples when faced with 5,000 hungry men (plus women and children), they turn to Jesus for all they need to do His service.

When all this is going on, it's rather too late to be preparing, of course. So the Lord has given us some advice in advance of the fact:

If you are a competent physician, you are qualified to do tenfold more good as a missionary for God than if you were to go forth merely as a preacher of the word. I would advise young men and women to give heed to this matter.<sup>21</sup>

As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions. For their own sake, they should, while they have opportunity, become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure. And those who do this will find a field of labor anywhere. There will be suffering ones, plenty of them, who will need help, not only among those of our own faith, but largely among those who know not the truth.<sup>22</sup>

It sounds like there will be a lot of mayhem going on. Not a pretty picture. But why? Why does God allow such stuff? As usual, the answer goes right back to the root issues of the great controversy:

## Essential

The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them.... The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation, not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory. He could not, consistently with His own glory, shield them from temptation; for the very object of the trial is to prepare them to resist all the allurements of evil.<sup>23</sup>

What? God is not going to shield His people from temptation? *We've got a promise for that!*.... He can't just dump us, can He? Look at the Bible verse!

God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.<sup>24</sup>

*So? Is God going to keep His promise or not?*

Of course He will. And more. Not only will He keep them from being tempted too strongly, but He will use those temptations like a divinely administered Bowflex to strengthen His people. You see, every time God tells Satan that he has to step back and leave us alone, the devil cries foul. "You're interfering with the test! You can't say they've chosen Your government, when You won't even let me give them my best sales pitch!" This is the same argument we see in the book of Job.

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21. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister Kellogg, September 16, 1892; Letter 34, 1892

22. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister Kellogg, September 16, 1892; Letter 34, 1892

23. *Great Controversy*, 528

24. 1 Corinthians 10:13

And Satan's right. That kind of interference all but nullifies any claim of our devotion to God. But nonetheless, temptation can be used by God to strengthen faith, and encourage obedience, if we will cooperate with His treatment plan. Not in some arbitrary manner, but like a patient under the skillful care of a physiotherapist. It hurts to stretch, it hurts to lift... but done properly it strengthens and heals muscles.

### ***Diasozo!***

When God's people are indeed able to "resist all the allurements of evil," it will only be through faith in the love, wisdom, and power of God. Eternally secured by the demonstration of the cross, their faith *in* Him holds them faithful *to* Him, just like the faith of the angels who never fell held them. And when their faith is strong enough to "resist all the allurements of evil," Jesus can step back and say, "Satan, your witness." (Remember the book of Job?)

Why? Because the whole business has gone full circle. The faith in God's love and wisdom that Lucifer lost, and then stole from Adam and Eve, God's people have finally regained. They have been "forgiven" just like a patient who's foolishly damaged his body, but listened to the Doctor, changed his habits, did the exercises, and found his way back to health. It's called *sozo*. And at the end of time, God's treatment plan includes the prognosis of *diasozo*,<sup>25</sup> the complete restoration our faith.

What might that look like? Exactly like righteousness by faith. Like Isaiah 58. Like self-denial and self-sacrifice. Exactly like we've been told:

In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off.<sup>26</sup>

*Oh! Can you imagine! What a horrible experience! Every earthly support... gone!*

It is safe to let go every earthly support and take the hand of Him who lifted up and saved the sinking disciple on the stormy sea.<sup>27</sup>

*Oh... well, at least that's some comfort.*

We can never perfect a round, full, Christian experience until every earthly support is removed, and the soul centers its entire affections about God.<sup>28</sup>

*Oh....*

The point is, since faith is the only thing that secures any created being, we need faith. Incidentally, that's why righteousness is by faith—it's not magic; rightly informed faith naturally produces righteousness. It may sound scary, but it's really "the highest and most precious of all human experiences, the constant dependence of the soul upon God."<sup>29</sup>

25. We've seen *sozo*. Now it's time to meet his big brother! A variant form because of the prefix, this word appears only once in scripture. Matthew 14:36—"made perfectly well"!

26. *Desire of Ages*, 121

27. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 558

28. E.G. White, Letter to Fannie Bolton, February 10, 1894; Letter 6, 1894

29. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 172

What's more, this is the demonstration that refutes Satan's last accusations. The key thought here is that faith *naturally* produces righteousness. It's a *sozo* thing: like a good lifestyle *naturally* producing health. What Lucifer missed in his calculations is the reality of faith. He looked at the law which required unselfishness, and saw that it was workable only if his own needs were constantly provided for by God. But when he lost faith in God, the law seemed unworkable, and because of his circumstances, faith was gone for good. He thought that would be the case for everyone... but he was wrong. We've seen this before, but it might mean more now:

Even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.<sup>30</sup>

Think of it like this: perhaps the most obviously non-arbitrary law we deal with is the law of gravity.<sup>31</sup> It doesn't depend on the city council, the legislature, the parliament, the president, or the king. And none of them could change it if they tried!

"*Too many kids down at the skate-park are getting hurt. We need to back off on the gravity thing.*" Oh yeah? Good luck with that. And the point is, God's law is just as certain and unchangeable. Lucifer thought otherwise, and never understood how a sinner could be forgiven without changing the law.

Well, there was war in heaven, and all the disaffected ones were overcome and cast down to the earth. I want to tell you that that wonderful Lucifer who wanted the highest place, lost his hold of heaven. He would not repent, and therefore there are two parties in our world.... There were agencies that came from heaven. Why, they had intelligence, the greatest intelligence. They did not lose their intelligence all at once. But they had not the power, the connection with God, the power of discernment, to understand that if they repented, they could be brought back again.<sup>32</sup>

Lacking the discernment (of God's mercy) because he had willfully severed his connection to God (and that "in the light of God's glory"), Lucifer didn't think *anyone* could be "brought back again." But he was wrong. Perhaps he really thought God's law was what it was just because God said so. Thinking God was revengeful and stubborn, how could he possibly conceive of forgiveness? And then there's his final argument: forgiveness was impossible if the law wasn't arbitrary. How can you stop gravity?

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30. *Desire of Ages*, 761

31. Bear in mind that gravity is serving here as an illustration, not as something completely equal to the law of heaven. The point is that gravity is as impossible for humans to change as the law of heaven is for God to change.

32. Ellen White, "Thoughts on Revelation 19"; April 7, 1910; Manuscript 80, 1910

Aerodynamics.

*What?*

Aerodynamics. That's how you stop the negative effects of gravity. Planes fly without doing away with gravity. It happens all the time.

There is a law of sin and death—as real as gravity. But there is also a law of faith and the Spirit of life<sup>33</sup>—as real as aerodynamics. The key is faith. The “righteousness by faith” kind of faith. The “justification by faith” kind of faith. The “faith of Jesus” kind of faith. The “this is our victory” kind of faith. The kind of faith Lucifer gave up (which is why “whatever is not from faith is sin”<sup>34</sup>).

That's the kind of faith that Jesus talked about when He said, “According to your faith, be it unto you.”<sup>35</sup> And when blind men, and lepers, and women bowed down with infirmity, and paralytics let down through the ceiling were healed, they *weren't sick anymore*. The effect of their diseases—even those diseases brought upon themselves by their own actions—were gone. Even the leper could rejoin family and society. And when God's people are *diasozo'ed*—made perfectly well—they can rejoin the family of the unfallen and loyal throughout the universe.

## What to Do Now?

Booklets, it turns out, are just another kind of preaching. They can be good... but they'll never be a replacement for actions. If these pages are of any value in the final analysis, it will be because they inspired someone, somewhere—maybe even you—to push forward the “true interpretation of the gospel.” May *that* tribe increase.

Because so little effort has been made to engage young men and women in the missionary work which must be done to bring the gospel invitation to all, there is but one worker where there should be a hundred. The indifference which is manifested for suffering humanity is charged against churches and families and individuals.<sup>36</sup>

Unless there are those who will devise means of turning to account the time, strength, and brains of the church members, there will be a great work left undone that ought to be done. Haphazard work will not answer. We want men in the church who have ability to develop in the line of organizing and giving practical work to young men and women in the line of relieving the wants of humanity, and working for the salvation of the souls of men, women, youth, and children.<sup>37</sup>

We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work.<sup>38</sup>

33. Romans 8:2

34. Romans 14:23

35. Matthew 9:29

36. *Review and Herald*, March 1, 1898

37. *Welfare Ministry*, 105

38. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 62