

JEHOVAH'S CHARACTER

(Discourse by W. M. Wisdom, July 1, 1914, Asbury Park, N.J., starting on page 228 of the 1914 Convention Report.)

The Bible, the grand old Book, informs us that the reverential fear of the Lord, which is in fact based upon a true knowledge of His character, is the very beginning of wisdom; and further that God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world, for the world by its own wisdom knows not God, whom to know is life eternal. Many, it is true, know of God, but few indeed know Him in the strict sense of the term, for to know God is to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul, strength. We therefore see that wisdom, heavenly wisdom, is built upon, or of knowledge; in fact, knowledge is the mere material of which wisdom builds, and it is the principal thing, as the Scriptures declare, happy is the man that findeth it.

Now I am sure we all appreciate the wonderful light which has come to us in respect to the present truth, through Divine favor, and I am equally sure we all realize our need of increasing wisdom, the wisdom that cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, consisting of the fruit of righteousness. If we would have this wisdom, we must then follow the Divinely appointed course, go to the fountain of all knowledge, the spring of infinite wisdom; then drink deeply from this fountain, be refreshed, exhilarated from this spring. To do this, we must use the cup of all grace—the opportunity granted us of knowing God—and this we may do by a reverential study of Jehovah's character, as He has been pleased to reveal the same to us through His Word. The beginning of such study is the beginning of wisdom.

Jehovah is such a great, grand, noble, lofty, exalted Being, infinite in wisdom, majestic in power, boundless in love, sublime in thought, mysterious in ways, that words are wholly inadequate to express a true conception of Him; and as we believe, our highest ideals in this respect are so far below the reality that they pale into nothingness, as it were in comparison.

Study Necessary

Some one has truly said that "The proper study for mankind is man;" concurrently we therefore say, the proper study for the new creature is the character of Jehovah; because our hope is that ultimately "we shall be like Him"—our Lord, who is the express image of Jehovah's person. As the Apostle states the matter, "Who will change the body of our abasement, that it may have the likeness of His glory." Who is the splendor of His glory, and the image of Himself? Phil. 3:21; Heb. 1:3 (Syriac).

We are all agreed, I am sure, that the bodies we now have are very unsatisfactory; because of imperfections, inherited blemishes, painful weakness, ugly, deformed, decrepit, marred and scarred by reason of the fall to such a degree that like as our dear Bro. Sexton said, when we finally get rid of them we shall never want to see or hear of them again. But the provision is that by and by, if faithful, we shall have new bodies, glorious bodies, be like Him, who is the “splendor of Jehovah’s glory.”

Now, man we know; and from the Bible we learn that he was created in Jehovah’s likeness, similitude, mental and moral, but he has fallen so far from his original perfection that there is but little of His image reflected in him. Therefore, our knowledge of man will not aid us much in the study of Jehovah’s character; and since “no man has seen God at any time,” how, then, can we have any knowledge of Him as a basis from which to study His character? Let us say first of all, in our investigation, that if we would gain any light on this matter, then we must bend all our efforts to this important work.

Now, as we have learned, there are four ways by which things may be known, namely: by intuition, by observation, by experience, by information. We see we could know nothing of God by intuition, which is a quality or power limited to the Divine mind. And to say that we could know Him by observation would be negative to the Scripture, which declares that “no man hath seen God.” It would be a manifest absurdity to say we could know Him by experience. So, then, the only way it is at all possible for us to know God is by information. But where shall we go for information? We reply, “to the Bible, God’s Word, the record of His own thoughts, the delineation of His own character, which is able to make men wise unto salvation.”

But this Record must be studied reverently, and from the viewpoint of the Divine Author, if we could hope to get a true conception of the character of Him who gave the Word, made the Record. In God’s Word we find a revelation of Himself, for His character is shown there; and we will study this Word properly, prayerfully, reverently, we shall know Him, whom to know is eternal life. It is manifest that those who believe in the doctrine of eternal torment do not know God at all, for to know Him is to love Him, reverence Him, worship Him in spirit and in truth, because His infinite goodness calls forth all that is within us to magnify and glorify His most holy name.

In Knowledge Is Strength

“I know Him,” declared the Master; and it was by or as a reason of this knowledge that He was enabled to justify many. This knowledge enabled Him to endure the cross, submit to heartless mockings, and despise the ignominy, the shame heaped upon His innocent head by His enemies. Through this untold suffering the way of redemption was opened up; as a result of His knowledge release from the Adamic condemnation was made possible.

Our Lord's intimate knowledge of the Father was therefore the source of His marvelous strength, His wonderful endurance, which enabled Him to bear the cross, despise the shame, suffering ignominy in every conceivable form, even the death of the cross. He had been with the Father from before the foundation of the world, from the very beginning; as the Logos He was the first and only direct creation of God; therefore by reason of such long and intimate relationship He knew perfectly the character of the gracious, loving Father, the great Jehovah, the Almighty God, whom to know is life eternal. To truly know God is to love Him sincerely, trust Him unreservedly.

This knowledge formed to be a bulwark against which the assaults of Satan prevailed not. He knew the Father to be just, loving, wise, and that He had the power which would enable Him to do according to His own will. In proportion, then, as we know the Father, we will to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and in this strength be able to withstand the temptations, the assaults of the adversary. Of ourselves we can do nothing. In Him is our strength.

And since the Father is too wise to err, and too loving to be unkind to any of His creatures, the Son well knew that nothing could befall Him, no experience come to Him, save that which would work out some good purpose in the Divine program; and if this entailed mental and physical suffering for Him, He was willing—for He had come to the earth to do the Father's will, irrespective of what it might cost Him. By this knowledge of the Father's character and the hope of the reward, the joy set before Him, He proved faithful unto death. "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many." Without this intimate knowledge we doubt if our Lord would have been able to stand the crucial tests to which he was subjected. The Scriptures seem to so indicate that He would have failed, as did Adam.

How We May Know

Now God wishes us also to know Him, whom to know, truly know, is life eternal—don't forget this, friends—and He had made it possible for us to know Him. Therefore, He invites us to draw near to Him, get acquainted with Him, in order that He might appropriately draw near to us, that the acquaintance might be mutual. While of the world in the camp condition, we were very far from God, knew nothing about His loving character, and were aliens and strangers from His favors. We began to "draw near," when we turned from open sin and left the camp condition, and faced toward the tabernacle to seek reconciliation. But this was only the first step in the matter of getting acquainted with God. Our part does not begin to "shine" until we are fully justified, then it shines, more and more unto the perfect day.

Therefore the nearer we get to God in spirit, in right speaking, right thinking, the nearer will God be to us, because as we thus “come unto Him,” figuratively we shorten the distance between God and ourselves. And the nearer we thus get to God the clearer conception we shall have of His glorious character, the fuller knowledge we shall have of Him generally, and the deeper appreciation we shall have of His loving favor toward us. For to truly know God is to truly love Him. So we must never draw back from the cross that bears us to Him, closer to Him. Therefore, those who long and seek for fellowship Divine, should pray, “Lord, use any means to lift me up, e’ven though it be a cross.”

Trials Assistful

Strictly speaking, our crosses are the trials which come to us in connection with our service of the truth, as a result of our faithfulness to our covenant by sacrifice. Of necessity this signifies cost to the “old man,” but as Bro. Russell says, “That which costs nothing, manifests nothing;” in other words, is valueless; “but afterwards these experiences will bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness, provided we have been properly exercised by them.” Did you, dear friends, ever pass through a severe trial without fully realizing “afterwards” that it had been the means of drawing you nearer to the Lord, causing you to sense His presence with you more keenly than ever before? I know your answer by your happy, joyful, peaceful faces.

No one can gainsay that a saddened heart is a softened heart; and a softened heart is a sympathetic heart, reflects more of the image of God. Our Lord was made a faithful High Priest by the things which He suffered, so He could succor all who came unto Him, who is the High Priest of our profession. Therefore, as we study our own hearts, which have been softened by trials, troubles, sorrows, we begin to appreciate something of the tenderness of the heart of the loving Heavenly Father. How loving, how tender, how compassionate, how long suffering He has been toward us, and with us! Therefore, such study will aid us very materially in the study of Jehovah’s character, in appreciating His love.

Love Based Upon Knowledge

We again assert that those who believe in the awful doctrine of eternal torment do not know God at all; for these would not themselves do what they ignorantly charge God with not only doing, but represent Him as rejoicing in the doing it; whereas His Word assures us that He has no pleasure in the loss of any—even in the death—much less in the endless torture of such, but instead wills, would be pleased, that all should be saved through coming to an accurate knowledge of the truth—to know Him, which is the beginning of wisdom, for the Bible states that the mercy of the Lord endures forever. He is good to even the unthankful; very tender, loving, compassionate.

No one can truly know God who does not appreciate and practice the principles of righteousness and truth and mercy; which mark the character of the great Jehovah. So if we would know God more intimately, then we must take the necessary steps to bring us into this blessed relationship—observe and practice those principles at all times. And more and more as we practice them, more and more will we come to appreciate the progenitor of them, and correspondingly desire to be like Him and see Him as He is. The result will be a transforming of our characters by reason of our being “drawn nearer” to the Lord. This drawing, however, is one of our own volition, for God never coerces our wills, for he who would serve Him must do it in spirit and in truth—willingly, joyfully. True, there is a sense in which God draws us to Him.

Many are called, but comparatively few “drawn” but few indeed of these are willing to follow the Divinely appointed way, “Draw near to God.” Hence there are but very few who really know God, whom to know is life eternal, because they never get near to Him; and there is no real life separate from God. As the Apostle states, it is the love of Christ which constrains us, draws us, and nothing else will, for “fear hath torment.” No one is ever made really better through fear; for God looketh upon the heart attitude.

Purpose of Justification

The very purpose of justification being opened up in the present age is that, as many as it may “draw near” to God, leaving the world and worldly things behind, and by sacrifice come into covenant relationship with Him, through full consecration of their all; and the more complete our consecration, the fuller will be our peace and joy because of our nearness to the Father, for strictly speaking He “draws near” to such and such only as “draw near” to Him in the manner indicated. Much, we see, depends on ourselves. God has graciously opened the way, but leaves us to follow in that way, or not, as it may please us. He will not coerce.

So, then, if we would know God more intimately, we must use our talents, bend all our energies to the accomplishment of this purpose—by study of His Word, and the Bible helps; by meditation day and night upon His gracious plans and purposes, His law and His precious promises, ever bearing in mind that even “the Heavens declare Thy glory.” A reverential study of God’s character, in the light of the Bible and reason tends to expand the mind generally, broaden our views, enlarge our hearts, quicken our perception, clarify our conception of His majestic splendor by a sense of His goodness, grandeur, sublimity. Such study will inculcate the more and more in us the spirit of reverence, veneration for God; purifying us in act, in thought, for “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” This study will lift us away from the earth and all things earthly, elevate us above, far above the ordinary incidents of this life, aiding us to continually sit in the Heavenlies with Christ. The poet has caught the thought:

“Thy grace and glory Thou dost give

To those who near Thee ever live.”

When God Was Alone

Let us now focus our minds on the Being, on the personality of Jehovah, as He has been pleased to reveal the same, bearing in mind that the Scriptures declare, He is “from everlasting to everlasting”—the self-existing One. And, since He is the great first cause, of necessity there must have been a time when He was alone in the universe. We know this must have been so, yet we can neither explain nor comprehend it; indeed the infinite mind cannot properly grasp the thought, consist without a cause. Such things are beyond our range of the finite mind; our minds grow hazy, our heads dizzy, when we would try to think of such a matter, and as Bro. Russell says, “The very best we can do is to think at it.”

The first and only direct creation of God was the Logos, and through Him were all things made, for without Him was not anything made. And when the Logos was created, then it was that Jehovah for the first time had companionship. Nevertheless, owing to the completeness of the Divine perfection, companionship was not necessary to the happiness of God, for the One who inhabiteth eternity is self-centered and the perfect poise of His character is such that it is not dependent upon any extraneous influences for balance, happiness. But by reason of Jehovah’s perfection of being, it is His pleasure to do good, afford pleasure to others. Hence He brought into existence through the Logos, intelligent creatures in His own image, with attributes similar to His own, though limited in scope, while the unlimited space of the Universe is encompassed by the Divine mind, with the desire and purpose that these should be supremely happy.

Attributes Amazing

Astronomers tell us that thus far more than a billion of worlds have been discovered, which are more or less like our own; and these we may assume, are in a process of preparation for habitation by other intelligent creatures, yet to be brought into existence. This we would understand will be the great work of the endless ages to be done by Christ and the Church. The mere suggestion of this thought brings before our minds the vastness of the universe, the boundless possibilities before us and the great privileges we may enjoy with our Lord in the ages to come. Divine goodness has already been made manifest to us in some degree in bringing of us into being; then recovering us from the fall, and granting us an insight into His glorious plan, with the ultimate object of permitting us to be associated with His dear Son in things of glory, sharing His name, His nature, His inheritance. Amazing thought! We are truly lost in wonder, love and praise, as we meditate upon Divine Goodness to us. “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; there is no place where Thy voice is not heard.”

The Heavens Declare Thy Glory

We stand amazed at the immensity of space and the law and order governing the universe. The person who can look upon this wonderful display of superhuman wisdom and power, and then believe that those millions of worlds created themselves and maintain their own order, is so devoid of reason that he is properly what the Bible declares, “A fool.”

He who can look into the sky and see there the immensity of creation, its beauty, its order, its harmony, its diversity, must be impressed with the fact that the Creator is vastly his superior, both in wisdom and in power. Every plant and every flower speaks volumes of testimony on this subject. Consider the lily, intricate in construction, exquisitely beautiful in coloring and delicate in form and texture, it speaks of wisdom and skill far above the human. Let human reason do her best to trace known facts to reasonable and competent causes, giving due credit to Nature’s laws, but back of the intricate machinery of Nature is the hand of its Author, the Intelligent, Omnipotent God. How insignificantly small we feel in the presence of the Creator!

*The Heavens declare Thy glory, Lord;
In every star the wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold the Word,
We read Thy name in fairer lines.*

The Divine Attributes

Let us now look at God, view Him, as we see His character revealed in the glorious attributes of justice, wisdom, power, love. These being coordinate, as well as coexistent. Now to realize the existence of the Almighty God is but to dread His omnipotent strength unless we can also see Him possessed of justice, wisdom, benevolence, goodness—corresponding to His power. Some see His strength and power, but fail to comprehend anything of His wisdom; and if they recognize both His wisdom and power, they lose sight of the fact that His throne is founded upon justice. And of the comparatively few who distinguish all the foregoing attributes the majority of these are quite blind to the scriptural teaching that God is the personification of love.

We believe it will profit us, then, to bring before our mental vision the character of Jehovah as it is exhibited in His attributes, taking first

Justice:

Now, as the Scriptures declare, Justice is the very foundation of Jehovah’s throne; and that by no possibility can He do anything in violation of its principles. Therefore, we see, that whatever He does must of necessity be just, right, equitable. Though He never

afflicts unjustly, but has been longsuffering to mankind, yet He purposes, “In due time,” to execute justice and judgment on the earth, laying justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet; for just and right is He.

As gracious as He is, still He can exercise the other attributes of His character only in harmony with the principles of justice, and never at the expense thereof. Just first, is the Divine standard, then generous. Even love can not be exercised at the expense of justice. But when justice has been satisfied, love and mercy will be made manifest to all mankind. More and more must we put into practice in our daily lives the principles of justice, in right doing, right speaking, right thinking, both in respect to our attitude toward the world as well as toward our brethren. Such is the Divine standard. Only as we see, appreciate, and are influenced by these principles of righteousness, will we take on the character likeness of the Master who reflects the image of the Father, the Mighty God. *“Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints.”*

Wisdom:

The Scriptures assure us that Jehovah is the very embodiment of wisdom; that He is “perfect in knowledge;” and that, “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning;” for “By wisdom He founded the earth,” “declaring indeed the end from the beginning,” for God knows the end of things from the beginning of things. We see, then, that all wisdom inheres in the Divine Jehovah, who indeed is the fountain of all knowledge as well as of truth and of righteousness. The scope of His mighty intellect reaches to the utmost bounds of possibilities; comprehends fully all causes, discerns with precision all effects. Therefore, knowing His own purposes and having all power, He can easily declare the end from the beginning, as the Scriptures assert, for “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” Therefore, He is too wise to err.

Being the Creator of all things, the sustainer of all order, He is likewise thoroughly acquainted with all law, physical, moral, intellectual, so that no problem could arise the result of which would not be manifest to His mind, even in advance. Therefore, the deep laid plan which He proposed in Himself from the beginning and which has required long ages for its accomplishment. He has been able to look across the intervening periods and see the fulfillment of His glorious purpose in an intelligent creation established in righteousness. Truly to the thinking mind, the existence of an intelligent Creator is fully demonstrated by the evidence round and about and above; yea, and within us, “for we are His workmanship,” whose power of mind and body speaks of a marvelous skill beyond our comprehension. This One whose wisdom planned and whose power guides the universe immeasurably transcends our own, that we instinctively worship and adore Him.

*“The Author of Nature’s wondrous laws,
Preserver of its glorious grace;*

*We hail Thee as the great First Cause,
And here delight Thy ways to trace.”*

Power:

God Himself declares that He has all power, both in Heaven and on earth. “I know that Thou canst do everything,” declares the prophet, “and that no thought of Thine can be hindered.” “With God all things are possible,” our Lord asserts. “Is anything too hard for Jehovah to do?” He Himself inquires. “He is excellent in power,” by the exercise of which He laid the foundations of the earth and stretched the line upon it; likewise created and keeps in precision the myriads of worlds which comprise the universe.

We used to think that in some inscrutable manner Satan had gotten the better of God in matters pertaining to the earth and the affairs of man, for we could both see and feel Satan’s power, but we now realize that such conditions have been wisely permitted for a time by Jehovah, and that from the very beginning He has worked His sovereign will. Not only will He finally make the wrath of man to praise Him, but even the work of Satan shall in the end be overruled for the highest good of all His intelligent creatures, not only in Heaven and earth, but throughout the eternal ages of the future.

*“God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.*

*“Deep in unfathomable mines Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will.”*

Love:

Jehovah is presented to us in Scriptures as the personification of love—God is love. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God,” who manifested His great love for us in the Redeemer. “Greater love hath no man than this,” saith the Master, “that he lay down his life for his friends.” This Jesus did, who was the image of the Father. Life is the most precious possession anyone can possibly have, for without life there is no existence. Yet where love rules supreme it counts not life dear. Love, therefore, we see is the greatest thing, the most potent influence in the universe, for God is love. It is indeed the sum of all the graces, representing as it does, the essence of the Divine character. As the Apostle explains, love remains after all earthly things pass away. The depth of God’s love for the Church is not fully comprehended by us, because we do not yet know Him fully.

From the Bible we learn that God delights in doing good, in exercising the attributes of His character. The creation of angels and of men was indeed His good pleasure; and having thus created these in His own image and likeness, with capacity for enjoyment, He desires that their happiness should be complete like His own and their life therefore everlasting. The heavenly hosts are still enjoying the fulness of these blessings—the

ninety and nine, which went not astray—but the “Lost Sheep”—the human family—wandered away from the fold of God, and lost Divine favor. The Giver of every good and perfect gift then sent the Great Shepherd after the “Lost Sheep,” with purpose of having it returned to the fold of favor. But this act was at great cost to the Sender as well as to the “Sent of God.” What a wonderful manifestation of love on the part of both we have in this transaction! Such wondrous love!

Surely it was with the tenderest emotions of love that the Father made the sacrifice of His well beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased! To all the other graces of character possessed by the Logos was now added the further grace of full submission to the Divine will even though it pointed to humility, ignominy, suffering, death. And did the loving Father let Him go on this errand without any sensation of sorrowful condition? Had He no appreciation of a Father’s love when the arrows of death pierced the heart of His beloved Son? Yea, verily; the unfeigned love of the Father sympathetically shared all the suffering of the Son. True love weeps with those who weep, as did Jesus at the tomb of His friend Lazarus. The statement of the Apostle illustrates the principle: “When one member of the body suffers, all suffer.”

Emotional Nature Not Necessarily A Changeable Nature

The capacity for pleasurable emotions necessarily implies the possession of emotions of the opposite character; for pain and pleasure, sorrow and joy, are properly considered the ebb and flow of the same emotion—the capacity to suffer keenly and enjoy deeply. So contrary to the common thought, an emotional nature is not necessarily a changeable nature—double-mindedness.

The Scriptural exhibition of the mind of God clearly indicates the emotional nature of God, of which fact we may judge by a realization of our own emotional nature, since man was created in God’s own image, and the same faculties remain, though greatly impaired. Nevertheless, we are to remember that God changes not at any time; that He is the same yesterday, today and forever; for with Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Now, as we have learned, the mind of God expresses the character of God; so also does the mind of His creatures express the character of His creatures; for as the Scriptures declare, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” And if we think like Christ, then we shall act like Christ, and if we act like Christ then we shall finally be like Christ. The great Apostle, recognizing this principle, said, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” who was and is the express image of the Father, Himself declaring that, He who had seen Him, had seen the Father.

Therefore, if we would see and know God, we should more and more look upon the Crucified One, and cultivate the graces of His character, which reflect God-likeness. The Father willed that His well beloved Son should die, the just for the unjust; and in loving

obedience, the Son “offered himself” as the Lamb without spot and without blemish, for He came to the earth expressly for the purpose of doing the Father’s will in this respect. We conclude, then, that in proportion as we cultivate a like “mind,” the “mind of Christ Jesus”, the purpose, the desire, the delight to do the Father’s will now, shall we have the comforting assurance of finally being like Him, seeing Him face to face. What joy awaits us if we are faithful unto death! In love, God planned it all; and the poet had caught, as if by inspiration, the Divine thought:

*“Love Divine, all love excelling,
Joy of Heaven to earth come down;
Thou hast made with us Thy dwelling,
Love doth all thy favors crown.”*

Summum Bonum

Now as the Apostle assures us, the sum of all the graces of Christian character is love; so in like manner we conclude that the sum of all the Divine attributes is the Divine character, which is expressed in love, and beyond which nothing could be grander, more glorious. So having reached the reasonable conclusion relative to the character of Jehovah, we must also conclude that the possession of these attributes argues their proper use. And so it has been. Their existence led to the creation of countless millions of worlds, with the great variety we see above us and about us—the wonderful diversity of His works.

We note also the creation of the heavenly hosts in His own image likeness; finally that of man; with provision for the one class as boundless as for the other. And having so created man, what more reasonable than to suppose that the Creator would finally surround the work of His hands with such blessings as would make their existence happy in the extreme! We so find. The loving Father has boundless resources, and these will be called upon for restoring man to his lost estate, lifting him up out of sin and degradation and death, then surrounding him with everything needful to make his everlasting future happy, joyful.

Now, by reason of the completeness and coordination of the Divine attributes—justice, wisdom, power, love—we see that Jehovah’s character is perfect in the supreme degree. Yet the Father’s favors have been spurned, His righteous authority has been conspired against, His character is misunderstood, misrepresented, maligned, so that for 6,000 years He has endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. Still His love and mercy abound toward the human family. Yes, Jehovah has a great and wonderful plan. Behind this plan His gracious character has been hidden. Rightly understood this exemplifies and emphasizes His character, the attributes of which we have already examined in the light of reason, and of the Scriptures. Wonderful indeed is our God.

True there has been great commotion in the family of God on earth, disrupted as it has been by Satan; but in this He has had no pleasure. In full consciousness, however, of His own moral perfection, His unerring wisdom, His mighty power, and with the fullest appreciation of the principles of justice and the keenest love of the beauty of holiness, patiently and peacefully in the midst of the tribulation He has endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. But rejoicingly He looks forward to the grandeur of His finished work: the everlasting peace and happiness of His entire family in Heaven and on earth. Yea, verily; great is our God! Just and wise and loving, are His ways.

*“High in the Heavens eternal God,
Thy goodness in full glory shines;
Thy Truth shall break through ev’ry cloud
That veils and darkens Thy designs.”*

Concluding Thought

We remind you again of the Apostle’s declaration that Christ is the express image of the Father’s person, while our Lord himself stated that those who had seen Him had seen the Father. Therefore, if we come to know the Master, then shall we also know the Father, for they are one in character-likeness as well as in purpose and in nature. And as we come to know and to appreciate our Lord’s beautiful character as marked by His loyalty to the principles of righteousness and to the Father’s will, in that He came into the world to die, the just for the unjust, our hearts respond with increasing gratitude to our loving Redeemer and our loving Heavenly Father, whose plans our Lord was carrying out.

More and more then, as we long for fellowship Divine, should we seek to “draw near” to God and to be recognized of Him as members of His family. Through the Word the Master instructs that whosoever will walk in His steps shall eventually see God in the fullness of glory. We are to copy Him, who loved righteousness and hated iniquity; as a consequence, God anointed Him above His fellows—the angels. He proved His loyalty by His death. He knew God, whom to know is life eternal.

*“By faith we see Thy glory now,
We read Thy wisdom, love and grace;
In praise and adoration bow,
And long to see Thy glorious face.”*

Finis

We should feel that our presentation of the character of Jehovah would be lacking in practical value if we failed to give you our closing thought, which forms the basis of this

study. As we have learned in our study, and trust have had deeply impressed upon our minds, the source of our Lord's marvelous strength and endurance, the bulwark of His faithfulness, was His intimate knowledge of the Father's character. For similar reasons was the great Apostle strong; for as we read, unto him was given more abundant revelations than to all the other Apostles, so that even when he was weak, then was he the strongest. This knowledge, which came through abundant revelation, was the fortification which saved him from being overthrown by Satan's assaults. He *knew* God.

We have in our midst today a living example of the most marvelous strength shown anywhere outside the Divine record, and in many respects equaling the most notable of these, while excelling many. We refer, of course, to our dear pastor, than whom none has been used more largely of the Lord in any age. You all know him in a general sense, through his masterful writings; many of you know him more or less personally; some of you, from long and personal contact, have come to "him as he is"—the most complex character of all history. All are charmed by his sweet, gentle, loving disposition; child-like, lamb-like, woman-like; yet withal as bold as a lion and as fierce as a tiger when a principle of righteousness is involved. Therefore, loved by all the saints, hated by the opposers of the Truth and feared by the enemies of the cross.

With a will like iron, nerves of steel, and as unmovable as the Rock of Gibraltar, for forty years he has stood as the great champion of the Lord's cause; with clean hands and a pure heart, patiently enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself, receiving into his loving heart the poisoned arrows of the bitterest persecution, the most relentless assaults of Satan, being hurled against him while battling for truth and righteousness. Nothing has ever seemed to move him in the least from the even tenor of his way. Is this not most remarkable? It surely is. Then why? There is a reason, to be sure. To our mind it is traceable to two causes, neither of which, perhaps, has been discovered generally.

We read in the Scriptures of a certain great character who was chosen from his birth for a special work the Father wished done; so in respect to "That Servant" whom the Lord raised up to give meat in due season to the entire household of faith. Cause number one. Proof: Evidences of our senses.

Having thus raised him up, God then taught him in the way he should go as He did Moses of old, that he might be learned in the wisdom of the Lord. Cause number two. Proof: His loyalty and faithfulness in the performance of the great work given him to do, and this at great cost. Even so, How was it possible for him or for any individual under present conditions, to carry to a successful issue the most astounding work of the age? Surely the Lord has been with him. Yes; but still this explanation does not explain. I long marveled at both the magnitude and character of his work, though knew that no man could possibly have written the things he has written and performed the work he has

performed unless he had been specially guided and upheld of the Lord. Nor does this explain the matter satisfactorily to the inquiring mind.

“In due time,” however, I learned of the whole secret. This revelation was made in the Watch Tower of August 1st, 1913, under the heading, “PEACE OF GOD.” [R1832-5] While Bro. Russell has written many wonderful things, here is the most marvelous article I have ever read from any pen. He here shows an intimate knowledge of God which is both astounding and inspiring. Marvelous! Marvelous! A pen-picture to be sure, but so vivid that it lifts one away from the earth and all things earthly and sets him down in the very presence of the great Jehovah. No son could have more cleverly portrayed with pen the true, inner character of his own father, than Bro. Russell has here the character of the Heavenly Father. I have read this article many, many times, and each time with increasing interest and wonderment.

Clear knowledge of God sustained our Lord, supported the great Apostle; and 'tis this which giveth strength to our dear Pastor. He knows God, whom to know is life eternal. Would we have this strength? Then let us note carefully his life, his course, and what he has written for our instruction that we might know God finally in the fullest possible sense—be like him. Amen.