

## **God's Way Out**

"For Us and For Our Little Ones"

"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance."

Ezra 8:21.

### **Lesson 1. God's Way of Joy and Happiness**

If you would have your heart thrill with a new hope, read in this chapter of God's great plan for His children as shown at the world's beginning.

A HUSH falls over the group of waiting people at Southampton dock as the giant Queen Mary comes slowly and silently into her berth. For ships that sail the ocean have a strange fascination for the hearts of men and women. "Here she comes! What a majestic sight!" says a watching woman in a low voice.

"Yes, how smoothly she glides in!" responds the man with her, almost awe-struck as he glances up at the huge bulk of the vessel, and thinks of her 81,000 tons.

"You would never think she would roll and pitch out in the Atlantic, would you?" he asks. "It would look like a mighty tidal wave and an earthquake if she did that in here."

"But the waves don't slow her down, do they?" she says.

"No, very little. She goes over thirty miles an hour, storm or shine. Over three thousand miles in just over four days. No wonder the company is proud of her captain-and her designer."

The woman's voice is a little husky now. "Just look at the people on the decks now. They're waving handkerchiefs and shouting, all excited, to their friends down here on the dockside." And she furtively dabs her eyes, while he sets his teeth just a little tighter.

For somehow, at this time one instinctively feels that, not just three thousand passengers, but three thousands hearts and three thousand life-dramas are here. People loving, hoping, rejoicing, listening, shouting-waving wildly. One feels that an ocean liner like this is a miniature of our planet as it sails through space-a miniature of our old Mother Earth. The vessel which God designed for the home of mankind.

It is an interesting comparison. Here is the Queen Mary, in her time record-breaker of the Atlantic; on the other hand is "Mother Earth," the mighty and majestic vessel that carries us all.

This floating globe, the Earth, with its living freight of over two thousand million hearts, this giant sphere of six thousand quadrillion tons, goes travelling through space at 66,000 miles an hour.

Yes, sixty-six thousand miles an hour! And without a rumble or a quiver! That is two thousand times as fast as the Queen Mary. Mother Earth makes her great voyage around the sun—a voyage nearly six hundred million miles in length—and covers the whole of the course in one year. What an ocean-greyhound of space! What a dramatic voyage!

But our world is just one of a glorious company which the Lord God caused to travel around various suns. In our solar system there are a fleet of nine worlds and a thousand or more smaller craft—little globes, but we know none of these have inhabitants.

Around some other suns there are worlds—and possibly many of them bearing hearts that feel and love—all having as interesting an individuality as the boys and girls of a family. For the Creator of all worlds is a lover of individuality, and can easily adapt His creatures to the widely different conditions on other worlds. In our solar system we see:

Mercury, the Sparkling World, He made to hover near the Sun. We see it only at dawn or in the evening. Venus, the radiant Veiled Planet, He made to be twin of our Earth in size. If you wish to see what our Earth on her voyage looks like from a distance, gaze at fair Venus in the evening sky. Watch Venus as she sails by the beacons of star-land and the light-ships of outer space.

Mars, the Ruddy World, He made to glow with orange light. He formed Mars with mysterious white-caps, strange gray spaces and changing lines, and with two small moons.

Jupiter He made as the Giant World, ten times the diameter of our Earth. Cloudy bands cross Jupiter's face and eleven moons circle around the planet.

Saturn is "The World of the Beautiful Ring." What a crown of praise it is to its Creator! It is 70,000 miles across, a huge world with an immense ring, or disk, floating around it, and with ten moons wheeling nearby.

Neptune and Uranus-the Creator made these almost twin worlds, about four times the diameter of our own.

Pluto, the Far-Away World-was only discovered a few years ago. It is the outermost known world of the Sun's family. And our Earth-our home-with its oceans and continents, lakes and seas, mountains and forests and plains, with our one friendly moon circling near by-the Creator of all good made this Earth as our home and the home of our kindred.

Strangely checkered has been the story of our planet and its people. It is a record of different hearts-generous and jealous, loving and hating, kind and cruel, loyal and treacherous, modest and vain, mild and arrogant.

Whether gentle or violent, trembling or turbulent, weak or strong, good or bad, all of them are objects of earnest solicitude on the part of the heavenly Father. What is His way out for them from the unlovely experiences of the present time into the eagerly desired ideal world?

### ***When the Foundations of Our Home Were Laid***

What a marvelous theme for a moving picture would be the first thrilling week of Earth's romantic story--its first seven days! For "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested--the seventh day." [1]

That is the divine account of the creation of our world. There, too, is the reason we have a week of seven days. It has come down to us right from the week of creation.

And, strange fact--men all over the world, good and bad, atheists, infidels, Jews, Christians, pagans--are even now, by their observance of the seven-day week, testifying that the great Creator fashioned this world in that selfsame period of time--a week. There is no other feasible explanation for the custom of dividing time into seven-day periods. Think of it!

Twenty or thirty years ago many of our fathers, in the first flush of interest in some new scientific theories, began to feel it difficult to believe that such a mighty and wonderful planet could have been created in six literal days. But now, as knowledge has increased, those doubts are scarcely worthy of consideration. Our world is seen by the astronomer to be but as a speck of dust in comparison with the immeasurable universe. It is as nothing for the Eternal God, the Creator of the orderly, marvelous universe, to make a new world in six days--or in six hours, should He so choose.

Yes, what an amazing spectacle was the first week of Earth's history! There were thrilling, miraculous movements of masses of earth and oceans of water. The light of God appeared in heaven. The life-giving atmosphere bathed the new-formed globe as it revolved in its magnificence in its appointed setting. On the first day--Sunday, as we now call it--light appeared. On Monday, the firmament surrounded the earth. On the third day, mighty continents rose from the ocean. Continents with wide plains and lofty hills. What great ebbing tides and roaring floods there were as the waters flowed down to the lower levels! What valleys and river beds they carved out on their way! How our geologists would have loved to watch it!

And as the waters receded, God's voice spoke the word of command and the land brought forth its grass, its herbs, and its trees. Just as if it were a speeded-up film, graceful ferns slowly uncurl and reach upward. The flowers open. The trees appear.

It is a divine marvel of creation. A multitude of spots of green appear on the dark earth. Thousands of rootlets are pushing downward into the rich soil. Thousands of pairs of seed-leaves are pushing up from the ground. Other pairs of leaves unfold from between them. Behold, the plants are a foot high! They are little chestnut saplings.

Watch them! You can actually see them growing. They are now three feet high, ten feet, twenty feet. Hundreds of leaf buds, then flowers, burst out on them. Behold, here is a whole grove of chestnut trees!

And looking around on this third day of creation you see this amazing growth everywhere. Everywhere there is rising the glory of flowers and plants and trees. Here is food in abundance for the creatures soon to come. All nature is awaking to joyous life.

Not only wisdom--divine ingenuity--but a lover's extravagant affection and care were shown in these gifts of the great Designer. The beauty He placed in the roses, the lilies, the violets, and other flowers has gladdened the heart of man and woman since the world began. What an infinite variety of form these flowers have! Stars, circles, cups, chalices, and vases are all seen in these blooms. Every color and tint is found in their petals.

Then you mark the bewitching enchantment of perfume of a thousand delightful varieties, enrapturing the heart and captivating the mind, and the heart is forced to say, "Not only to give life, but to give happiness to His creatures was God's power manifest."

### ***The Sun Appears; and the Moon***

The events of the first Wednesday, the fourth day, can never be fully understood by mortal man. Here is portrayed the creation of the glorious sun and the shining moon. Can it be possible? Insects playing with grains of sand might more easily understand the building of the Queen Mary, or a modern broadcasting station.

But the account of it is as clear as the day. Attested by the most truthful One who ever lived, an eyewitness--Christ Jesus the Lord! The end of the day and the beginning of the next was marked by the setting sun for the first time. The new "Day" began not at midnight, but as the sun sank below the horizon.

### ***The Living Creatures Are Coming***

Thursday--the surface of the water is troubled by new life beneath. Shoals of fish are moving below. See, they leap high in the air! And there, they splash joyfully back into the water!

The silence is broken again, and new forms break fluttering into the air. They move erratically at first; but their wings soon find freedom, and we exclaim: "The birds! the birds! Here are the birds--beautiful creatures! All with the gift of flight!"

From a dazed revelation of creation in the morning, they are now awake and alive to the joys of their new existence. Here are the birds of paradise, the eagles, the gulls, the thrushes, the swallows, the tiny wrens--even the butterflies and the bees. They all have this wondrous power of flight.

More and more the modern airplane is patterning after these flying creatures, and one cannot help but feel that a study of the great Creator's work is the quickest path to a more complete knowledge of flight.

"The sweep-back of the wings gives greater stability," says an airplane enthusiast. And I think of the swallow's wings.

"It isn't so much the upward slant of the planes that lifts the machine. It's the vacuum formed behind the hump."

And I think of the wings of the albatross and the sea-gull which follow the ships.

"It's the streamline shape that gives the least resistance."

And again I think of the shape of the birds and the shape of their graceful wings. And a voice says, "Yea, and God knew all these things six thousand years ago."

The sixth day, Friday, was the last of God's divine working days in the creation of our world. Cattle appeared, browsing peacefully on the new grass. Other animals

of great variety came into being. Then our first parents were created. Adam, the man, and Eve, his companion, for whom the world had been prepared.

### ***Did Man Appear By Chance?***

No! it was no accident that man appeared on the earth. It was especially for him that the world had been designed. God declared that it would have been made in vain if it had not been inhabited. [2]

So God created Adam, the first man, who was to be king of the new world and the forefather of all its inhabitants.

What a royal ancestry man had! He was formed in the image of God. Science declares: "There can be no life without preexisting life." God declares: "I am that pre-existing Life."

While the animals of Earth were called into existence by the command--by the word of God--the Creator specially shaped and fashioned man out of the dust of the ground. Formed him with loving care as a sculptor fashions his masterpiece.

Then the Creator bent low over the form He had sculptured. "The lips of the Creator drew close to those of man. Who shall say they did not touch with the kiss of love? Has not that sign been the sacred symbol of love ever since?

"See, now God breathes into man the breath of life; and man becomes a living soul.

"That which had been dust, moved. The breast heaved, the heart began to beat. Warmth and color came to the cheeks. The eyes opened and man gazed into the face--full of love and glad welcome--the face of his Creator.

"And who shall say that no fond embrace was given? For not merely life, but a life full of love and joy, was the Creator's design for the one He had formed." [3]

Adam seems to have been of giant stature and of great physical strength. [4] Made only a little lower than the angels, he was of keen intellect and quick understanding. From the Scriptures it seems that he was clothed with a soft light or radiance, [5] like that of the angels, and needed no artificial clothing. This robe of light, illuminating everything he approached, may have revealed to him the secrets of nature, of leaf and blossom and tree, which by us are but dimly discerned.

Then God provided a companion who should bring great happiness to the heart of Adam. A companion who should be so like himself as to join in all his feelings and interests, yet with the charm of many attractive dissimilarities.

For the law of heaven is not exact similarity. Heaven does not cast its creatures in one mold. No, the members of God's great family of heaven and earth were all made with some special gift and with some charm of individuality so that all would be helpful to one another, be dependent on one another, and be blessed by one another's talents. [6] No one is fully complete in himself.

Thus God made the Man so there would always be a void without Woman. Adam realized this void in a special way after the animals of earth had passed before him, for in none of them could he find the companion he needed. So as he slept, God took from his side a mysterious bone, and by divine transmutation formed from this living substance a lovely woman. Like Adam, she was clothed with a beautiful garment of soft light--her bridal dress.

Fairest of Earth--how Adam's heart thrills with joy as he opens his eyes and gazes upon her, and notes the quick eager response of happiness on her face. As he rose, and when they stood in the shade of the great trees, their figures shone out like celestial beings.

This was earth's first marriage. What happiness filled their hearts as they saw one another! "How good God was to give me you," rose the thought of grateful joy in both their hearts. And then, as our poet Tennyson so wonderfully expresses it:-

"Love took up the glass of time and turned it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands:  
Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all its chords with might:  
Smote the chord of self, which, trembling, passed in music out of sight." [7]

What happiness there was in the clasp of the hand and the touch of loving lips! Thank God that a little of Eden has survived the rough winds of time and still exists in the love of man and maid.

How Adam rejoiced in his new God-given companion with her quicker intuition, her swifter appreciation of the beauty of the flowers, their delicate perfumes, and of every other loveliness displayed in nature! In Eve (as he called her), with her physical beauty, her gentleness, tenderness, and swifter sympathy, he found just the delightful companion his nature craved for.

Eve--hers were the nimble feet, the deft hands, beautiful hair, sweet breath, the grace and beauty of young womanhood. How Adam appreciated the music in her heart which brought song to her lips!

Man--his were sinewy arms, lithe limbs, the giant strength and honor of noble manhood. With laughter and love in his speech, great plans in his mind, joy and peace in his heart, and constant helpfulness for her.

With the companionship of each other their hearts were filled with the sheer delight of living.

### ***The New Home - The Bridal Gift***

"Where shall we make our home?" Then came the thought to Eve, as it comes to every bride-to-be. "Where shall be our home?"

Was there a smile on the face of the Creator as He listened? The Father of love had not forgotten to provide a home for His children. To complete their happiness He had prepared a lovely home for them in a spacious garden in the most beautiful part of the country of Eden.

In this garden, which seems to have stretched for scores of miles in every direction, grew majestic trees of every description and beauty of form. Abundance of fruit hung before them on every hand. Here were valleys glorious with flowers--ablaze with blossoms--and fields of rich grass of living green. The melody of bird songs and the music of breeze or stream delighted their ears on every hand. A broad, peaceful river of crystal water flowed through the glades and woodlands. Every bend brought to them a new picture of beauty until it left the garden and then divided into four streams.

By the river's bank grew a marvelous tree whose fruit should prevent disease or death. It was the Tree of Life. As long as they had access to this tree they could never die. No pain of head or heart or limb was to find place in that garden of old. No fever would be found there, no decay, no enfeeblement of mind or body, no distressing weariness.

No, by eating of that tree they would renew strength and vigor, and all the powers of mind and body would increase daily. Age lived far off; they never dreamed of pain. Eating of that tree of life they would live forever. Evil had no place in the hearts of the two lovers. Love, joy, and peace, gentleness, goodness, confidence in God, and self-control--these virtues ruled with kindly hand and made music in their souls.

### ***The "Birthday" of the World***

God was present on earth in a special personal way during the creation. And though His work was finished as the sun sank on Friday evening, it is not recorded that He then left the world.

No. On the seventh day He "rested." The hosts of heaven, "the morning stars," sang together in joy, and God Himself rejoiced in His new-born children. Rejoiced as earthly parents rejoice over the birth of their treasured offspring. No wonder angels and man sang for joy: "Glory to God in the Highest. Great and mighty are Thy works, O Lord Most High!"

To the newly created pair this must have been a day of loving companionship with God Himself. God Himself was their companion and teacher. They listened to His voice as He walked with them in the cool of the day. Never to be forgotten was the first wonderful rest-day, "the birthday of the world." "Saturday" almost seems a profane name to use for it.

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Made it holy; set it apart for a holy use; so that when the next Sabbath came the happy pair in the garden would rejoice to lay down their light tasks and have companionship with God in fuller measure than in the working days of the week. And every succeeding Sabbath was to bring a renewal of this blessed experience.

Even if they had never sinned, the Sabbath would have continued to be observed forever. It had nothing to do with sin or sacrifice or redemption. It was not a type, shadow, or figure. It would have existed throughout eternity as a glad reminder that the great Father whom men worshipped was the living God, the Creator of the world. It exists still. God has commanded its observance that we may ever remember His love and power, and find rest and renewal of body, mind, and spirit as we worship Him. We should observe it and remember the paradise of God.

This beautiful garden of Eden, "Paradise," as it has been called, was to be the center of the new kingdom. In course of time the happy voices of children should be heard in these lovely groves. Here boys and girls should smile in their safe dreaming and awake to the joys of each new day with all the tireless vigor of healthful youth. And parents' hearts should echo their laughter with never a thought of care.

That home in Eden was to be Earth's first "Garden City." It was God's plan that as the human race multiplied they would spread out from this "mother-country" to all parts of the world, making homes all over the earth after the model of Eden.

So would all men in the time to come, look back to that free, beautiful Garden City as “the mother of us all.”[8] Yes, the spirit of Eden was “God’s way of joy and happiness.”

REFERENCES:

1. Exodus 20: 11;
2. Isaiah 45: 18;
3. “The World’s Quest,” page 28;
4. Genesis 6:4:
5. Daniel 12:3; Matthew 13:43; Acts 3: 21;
6. 1 Corinthians 12:1-31;
7. Tennyson’s “Locksley Hall”;
8. Isaiah 54:1, 2; Galatians 4: 26, 27.

