

So Great Salvation

by J.F. Strombeck

~ 1940 ~

Second Edition

Strombeck Agency, Inc.

Moline Illinois

~ out of print and in the public domain ~

Chapter Three

SO GREAT COMPARED WITH CREATION

The greatness of salvation can never be fully understood by man while in the present mortal body, but some of the greatness can be seen by comparing or rather contrasting, it with creation. Both salvation and creation are GOD's work and His exclusively.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Thus GOD brought all matter and all energy into existence.

The heavens are the work of His fingers, and the moon and the stars were ordained by Him, **"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained"** (Psalm 8:3). This includes not only that which man can see with the naked eye, but all that lies even beyond the range of the strongest telescope. The vastness of it all is beyond the comprehension of man.

Consider next the earth with its rocks and minerals and its past life as recorded in the fossils. There are the precious stones, the diamond, the ruby, the sapphire and the emerald, each with its own special beauty and appeal to man. Then there are the marbles, granites, sandstones, limestone and slates used by man to build his houses and places of worship, amusement and business. Out of the earth man takes the ores and even the pure metals as gold and copper nuggets. By smelting and refining processes he produces metals which form the backbone of vast industrial and constructive projects. The soil of the earth when sown and acted upon by moisture and sunlight brings forth food for both man and beast.

The fossils tell their silent though eloquent story when great monsters roamed the forests. And some of the forests, even in layer upon layer, remain with their massive tree trunks preserved in stone almost as hard as the diamond. The coal beds proclaim to man that there were luxuriant tropical jungles upon this earth.

All of these rocks and minerals have their own peculiar properties and each one is always the same. They are all subject to fixed and determinable laws of chemistry and physics, many of which have long been known to man and others which are being constantly discovered. It might be asked, parenthetically, how did each of the metals and minerals acquire its own individual characteristics? What gave to each metal its coefficient of expansion, its specific gravity, its fusion point, its conductivity of heat or electricity, its tensile strength, its hardness, or softness, its toughness or brittleness, and its stiffness or pliability? These are all fixed and determinable.

The evolutionist tries to explain the characteristics and habits of plant and animal life by claiming chance variations from one generation to another through thousands upon thousands of generations. The laws of physics and chemistry are as complex as those of plant and animal life and the characteristics of the inorganic as fine as those of the organic. *But there are no generations to produce variations in the realm of the inorganic.* The gold and copper nuggets, the iron, lead, copper and silver ores, and the marbles, granites, etc. are as old as the mountains themselves. Where then did these fixed characteristics and laws come from? There is but one answer: GOD in His creative work brought forth each element with its fixed properties and made it subject to fixed chemical and physical laws.

Man can delve deep into the secrets of geology and discover much but the subject is so vast that there is much that is still to be learned.

In the same way consider plant life. How it shows forth GOD's creative power! The great redwoods of the Pacific Coast have stood for centuries. The firs and pines of the north, the palms of the south and all other trees each serves man in its own way and is always the same for there is an unchangeable law of life within. So also the grasses that produce grain, the plants whose roots sustain life, and others, the leaves of which serve as food, were all given their properties by the CREATOR. Still others bear flowers that enrich the life of man as roses and lilies. Each plant has its own habitat; the lichen on the solid rock, the Indian pipe in the rotted trunk of a fallen pine, the mistletoe in the high branches of trees, the ground hemlock in the densest shade, the sagebrush on the desert, the grains in the rich

soils and open sun, the lotus and the flags in the shallow water and the kelp on the ocean's bed.

Yes, plant life is another great division of GOD's creation that man can study and comprehend but it, too, is so vast that even after some six thousand years of human existence upon earth there is much left for succeeding generations to learn.

So also the animal world, from the smallest of the invertebrate insects to the largest of the mammals, as the elephant and the whale, might be considered. All were made by GOD, each according to its kind (Genesis 1:21) whether it be the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea or the beasts of the earth or things that creep upon the earth. To these also GOD gave life, but of a higher order than that given to the plants. They can all move about, in the air, in the water, or upon the face of the earth. Each one of the animals has its own characteristics and fixed instincts and habits of life, and is perfectly adjusted to its own environment. Men have written books on zoology and filled libraries therewith but there is more left to learn and new discoveries are made yearly. This, too, is but a part, and a small one, of GOD's creation.

Man is GOD's crowning work of creation. In His own image made He him and breathed the breath of life into him (Genesis 2:7). To man GOD gave the power of reproduction and gave to him the earth to subdue. He also gave man dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air and all things that move upon the earth (Genesis 1:26-30).

To man was given intelligence and power of reason so that he has been able to search out many of the mysteries of creation and is daily finding more. He has learned to take the coal from out of the earth and kindle a fire under a boiler filled with water and thereby haul his heavy trains. He pumps the crude oil out of the earth, refines it and uses it to fly his planes in the air at a rate of a mile in a few seconds. By use of a broadcasting instrument and another receiving instrument man sends his voice out over the air so that men in Washington, London, Paris and Berlin carry on a conversation as though all were in one room. He uses the X-ray and examines the bones of his fellow man. He coats a film, puts it into a camera and opens a shutter for 1/100,000 part of a second and makes a complete record of all that is in front of the lens. Man looks through a telescope at the stars and the moon. He determines the speed at which light travels. He also determines the speed at which the sun and the moon travel in their orbits. So also he finds the motions of the earth, and from all this data he predicts years and even centuries in advance, and that to a split second, at what time there shall be an eclipse of the sun or of the moon; whether it will be total or partial, and

at what place on the earth it will be visible. These serve as a few examples of what man can do. The list might be multiplied indefinitely.

Why can man do all this? Because GOD endowed him with intelligence and because of the fixed and unalterable laws of the universe which speak of a creative intelligence and therefore of a GOD back of them. He who created the heaven and the earth and fixed the laws for His creation also created man with intelligence to comprehend these laws and ability to subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28).

Space has permitted the mention of but a few of the wonders of creation. The subject is beyond exhaustion yet all this and all that might be added cannot be compared in greatness with that of salvation.

That man has so subdued the creation and so marvelously used it to his own good (and likewise to evil) is evidence that its mysteries can be fathomed in a large measure by the intellect of man. But man cannot by his own intellect fathom the mysteries of salvation. They must be revealed to man by the SPIRIT of GOD. It is written, "**Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us (who are saved) by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God**" (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

Great as it is, that which belongs to creation is finite. It can be measured by the measure of man. Gold is bought by the pennyweight and diamonds by the carat. Coal and steel are measured by the ton. Farms are sold by the acre and city lots by the front foot. Timber is valued by the thousand board feet of lumber that can be cut from it. Milk is measured by the quart and gasoline by the gallon. Transportation charges, whether by land, sea or air, are based on miles traveled. There is a depth to the sea, a height to the mountains and a breadth to the great plains. Rain falls by the inch and the temperature rises and falls by degrees. The heat content of coal is according to British thermal units. Electricity is bought by the kilowatt hours and gas by the cubic foot. Speed is measured by feet or miles per second, minute or hour. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. The distance to the stars is measured in light years and some of them are a thousand light years away. The distance is something like this: 5,865,696,000,000,000 miles. Great as this distance is, and beyond the grasp of the imagination of man, it is still within the limits of the finite for it can be measured by man.

There is a span of life for all living things whether they be plants, animals or mankind. It may not be more than a few fleeting moments or it may be hours, days, weeks, months or years and even thousands of years as in the

case of the great Sequoias of the Sierra Nevada Range. But for each there is a beginning and there is also a certain end. Even the earth and heaven have a beginning. **"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."** But salvation is according to the eternal purpose of GOD, **"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"** (Ephesians 3:11). It was promised before the world began, **"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"** (Titus 1:2) and **". . . was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began"** (II Timothy 1:9). So also salvation shall endure after the present creation has passed away. **". . . the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment . . . but my salvation shall be forever"** (Isaiah 51:6).

The creation is finite. It can be measured by measures devised by man and it can be comprehended, though incompletely, by the finite intellect of man. But upon that which pertains to salvation man can lay no "yardstick."

In speaking of salvation, GOD always uses terms that clearly belong to the infinite. Salvation is said to be eternal **"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"** (Hebrews 5:9); so also are redemption **"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"** (Hebrews 9:12); the life that is given to those who are saved **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16) and the glory to come **"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you"** (I Peter 5:10).

GOD's purpose in salvation is to conform man to the very image of His Own infinite SON **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"** (Romans 8:29). Forgiveness of sins is **"according to the riches of His grace"** (Ephesians 1:7). Believers are called **"to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (II Thessalonians 2:14) even the glory of Him by Whom the universe was created **"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made"** (John 1:3) and **"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him"** (Colossians 1:16). Though here on earth he who is saved dwells in a mortal body subject to corruption, he is promised an incorruptible and immortal body **"Behold, I show you a mystery; We**

shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory**" (I Corinthians 15:51-54) that shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of His SAVIOUR **"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself"** (Philippians 3:21). Salvation cannot be described otherwise than by the use of these infinite terms, terms that apply to GOD Himself.

To man in his original sinless state GOD gave dominion over the earth and all that is thereon. To those of fallen mankind who will be receive it as a free gift, GOD gives an infinite salvation and places them in a position far above all else in the universe **"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"** (Ephesians 2:6) and **"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,"** (Ephesians 1:20-22).

A salvation that is so great challenges man's most thoughtful consideration.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

* * *