The Pilgrim's Quest

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and ***confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims*** *on the earth. For they that say such things* ***declare plainly that they seek a country.***" (Heb. 11:13,14)

Pilgrim's Quest Bible Church
Pastor Garry E. Huff

The Call to a Christ-Like Love

"God is Love"
Revealed
(Part 2)

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God..." (I John 4:16)

God has endowed man with a great power. This power is not determined by might, strength, or some physical ability. This power is the power of the mind. God has given man above all earthly creatures the ability to think, reason, learn, discover, comprehend, and know. Man can think beyond the analysis of the laboratory into the world of the abstract. Man can see beyond the effects and discover the causes. One such "discovery" brings to mind Sir Isaac Newton in his understanding of the Law of Gravity. As the story goes, Newton observed the falling of an apple and began to think about the relationship between mass and distance. He opened the door for others to understand celestial motion. It was not long that man could accurately predict the motion of planets in the Solar System which had eluded man for centuries. Yes, man has been given a great power - the power of the mind.

But God gave man a living soul along with a thinking mind. "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" to accompany his intelligent capacity to think. God placed under man's authority rulership and dominion of His Creation.

Adam had no formal education, training, or experience, but was spiritually and mentally capable for his responsibilities as steward over God's vast New World.

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, he suffered a great loss, namely, the personal direct contact with God. Due to the enmity that was produced by sin, a "middle wall of partition" existed between God and man. Future generations could only by faith know God, relying upon Oral Revelation that was first spoken to Adam, and Natural Revelation from God's Creation. Man with his thinking-soulish-mind could only know God and have some understanding about God through these two avenues of Revelation.

The Book of Job presents the arguments and conclusions of five men who had only Oral Revelation and Natural Revelation. They understood that in the workings and doings of God that He was righteous and just. Job knew that "his Redeemer liveth." They knew that there was hope in man's immortality. But man was limited in his knowledge of God himself. These men faced a great puzzle that they could not unravel with all the powers of their minds. How could all that came upon Job, happen to a "righteous" and "just" man in God's sight? With their vast knowledge and wisdom, they could not answer the question "why do the righteous suffer?" They needed more revelation from God about His attributes that only God himself could reveal. A written revelation from God was needed.

What benefit Job and his friends could have found from a written revelation informing them about the nature of God! It took a revelation given by God to man stating, **"God is love."** As man reasons and thinks about law, order, and design; as man views the beauty of God's creation around him; as man ponders this planet earth teaming with life while a "magnificent desolation" exits elsewhere, man might conclude that God is loving. Man might even think that God is lovely. But it took God's Word to reveal that love is the very bedrock of His existence. All that God is, does, allows, and will do comes out of His heart of love even in the midst of sorrow, trouble, and disaster.

An incident occurred when I was about 12 years old that I have never forgotten. My father had finished preaching a weekend revival about an hour and forty-five minutes from home. After the service on Sunday night, we were in need of returning home as soon as possible

due to our respective duties on Monday morning. My father, mother, and three of us boys were traveling on a newly opened interstate highway in which the traffic was very light especially that late at night. A light, constant drizzle began to fall. When we were within forty miles from home, we had a flat tire. Here we were in the darkness of night, drizzling rain, without a flashlight and in a hurry to get home. Dad began to mutter - "why does this have to happen now in the dead of night, no light, and in the rain?" How inopportune! How inconvenient! How troublesome! It seemed that God was not very thoughtful, caring, or loving. Does God truly do all things for our good?

All of us boys climbed out of the car to help Dad, and finally after fumbling in the dark, we were able to change the tire as best as this predicament allowed.

When we traveled about 20 miles, we came upon a horrific accident. Due to the slippery roads, a car had overturned in the opposite oncoming traffic. Some of the cars did not have time to apply their brakes and slammed into the upside down car on the highway. Neither the Police nor the Rescue Squad had arrived. My father and brothers went to see if they could in some way assist. I was left in the car with my mother because the accident was too severe for me to view. After sometime when the Emergency Vehicles arrived, my father and brothers returned. I could see my father was greatly disturbed. He believed the flat tire was God's loving way of preventing us from being involved in this severe and tragic accident.

I learned that what seems a situation that God does not appear to be loving or caring, He is working in ways unknown for our good. His love is neither determined nor measured by momentary situations.

God *is* love. Oh! how this revelation is different from "God loves." Love is the very fact of God's essence. It is the very nature of His being. He loves because He ***is*** love. Love is the source of all that flows out of Him. "It is a delightful fragrance sprinkled upon earth's offensive odors. It sanctifies sorrow, and lightens afflictions. Burdens are easier borne by its impulse and inspiration. Divine love is life to our spirits. The more we possess of it, the more health we enjoy in our inner beings." ***God is love, and oh! how much he has loved us!***

Day by Day

Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in My Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure
Gives unto each day what He deems best,
Lovingly its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Ev'ry day the Lord Himself is near me
With a special mercy for each hour;
All my cares He fain would bear and cheer me,
He whose name is Counsellor and Pow'r.
The protection of His child and treasure
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;
"As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,"
This the pledge to me He made.

Help me then in ev'ry tribulation
So to trust Thy promises, O Lord,
That I lose not faith's sweet consolation
Offered me within Thy holy word.
Help me, Lord when toil and trouble meeting;
E'er to take, as from a father's hand,
One by one, the days, the moments fleeting,
Till I reach the promised land.

Verses for Thought of Heart:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8, 9)

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jer. 29:11)

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

"And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:19,20)