

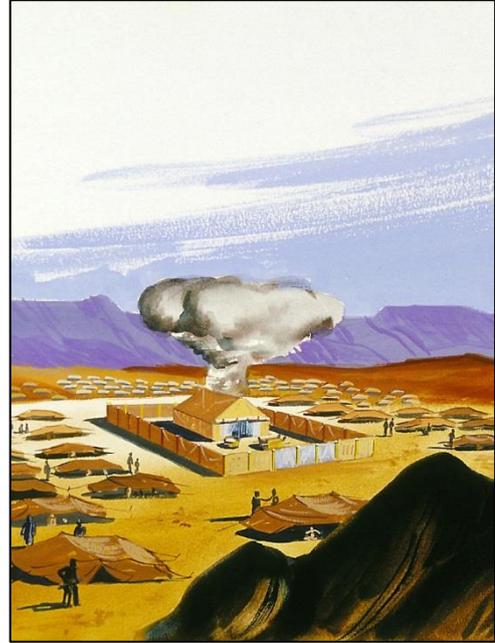
The Two Dispensations

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God's truth is the same in all ages, although differently developed to meet the wants of his people in various periods. Under the Old Testament dispensation, every important work was closely connected with the sanctuary. In the holy of holies the great I AM took up his abode, and no human being was permitted to enter there except by divine appointment. There, above the mercy-seat, overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim, dwelt the shekinah of his glory, the perpetual token of his presence; while the breastplate of the high priest, set



with precious stones, made known from the sacred precincts of the sanctuary the solemn message of Jehovah to the people. Wonderful dispensation, when the Holy One, the creator of the heavens and the earth, thus manifested his glory, and revealed his will to the children of men! {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 1}

The typical sacrifices and offerings of that dispensation represented Christ, who was to become the perfect offering for sinful man. Besides these mystic symbols and shadowy types pointing to a Saviour to come, there was a present Saviour to the Israelites. He it was, who, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, led them in their travels; and he it was who gave direct words to Moses to be repeated to the people. Those who sneer at the old dispensation, and professedly accept Christ in the new, do not discern that this same Christ was the ancient leader of Israel, and that from his lips came all the commands, all the rules and regulations, to govern more than a million of people. He who was equal with the Father in the creation of man was commander, lawgiver, and guide to his ancient people. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 2}

The Christ typified in the former dispensation is the Christ revealed in the gospel dispensation. The clouds that then enshrouded his divine form have

been rolled back; the mists and shadows have disappeared; and he stands revealed, not as the Jewish nation expected, as a powerful king who would conquer their enemies and achieve for them glorious victories, but as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. His divinity is now hid, not under a cloud, but under the garb of humanity. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 3}

As time has rolled on from creation and the cross of Calvary, as prophecy has been and is still fulfilling, light and knowledge have greatly increased. But it does not become believers in God or the Bible to pour contempt on the age that has led step by step to the present. In the life and death of Christ, a light flashes back upon the past, giving significance to the whole Jewish economy, and making of the old and the new dispensations a complete whole. Nothing that God has ordained in the plan of redemption can be dispensed with. It is the working out of the divine will in the salvation of man. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 4}

The sacrificial offerings were established by infinite wisdom to impress upon the fallen race the solemn truth that it was sin which caused death. Every time the life of a sacrificial offering was taken, they were reminded that if there had been no sin, there would have been no death. "The wages of sin is death." {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 5}

The word of God covers a period of history reaching from the creation to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. Yea, more; it carries the mind forward to the future life, and opens before it the glories of paradise restored. Through all these centuries the truth of God has remained the same. That which was truth in the beginning is truth now. Although new and important truths appropriate for succeeding generations have been opened to the understanding, the present revealings do not contradict those of the past. Every new truth understood only makes more significant the old. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 6}

With the broader, clearer light that shines upon us, we can see with greater distinctness the glory of the former dispensation. We can hold converse with the patriarchs of old; we can listen to Moses as he legislates for Israel, to the prophets as they look down through future ages and foretell coming events, and to the apostles as they lay open the mysteries of the new dispensation, and relate their personal experience and the wonderful words of Him that spake as never man spake. As we see the prediction of the prophets fulfilling

around us, we are brought nearer to them, and we read them with a deeper and more intelligent interest. And as time rolls on and we near the close of earth's history, we shall, if humble learners in the school of Christ, be able to comprehend still more clearly divine wisdom. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 7}

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the patriarchs and prophets, heard the gospel through Christ; they saw the salvation of the race through the substitute and surety, Jesus, the world's Redeemer. They saw a Saviour to come to the world in human flesh, and communed with him in his divine majesty. Abraham walked and talked with the heavenly angels who came to him in the garb of humanity. Jacob talked with Christ and angels. Moses held converse with Jesus face to face as one who speaketh with a friend. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 8}

From the creation and fall of man to the present time, there has been a continual unfolding of the plan of God for the redemption, through Christ, of the fallen race. The tabernacle and temple of God on earth were patterned after the original in heaven. Around the sanctuary and its solemn services mystically gathered the grand truths which were to be developed through succeeding generations. There has been no time when God has granted greater evidences of his grandeur and exalted majesty, than while he was the acknowledged governor of Israel. The manifestations of an invisible King were grand and unspeakably awful. A scepter was swayed, but it was held by no human hand. The sacred ark, covered by the mercy-seat, and containing the holy law of God, was symbolical of Jehovah himself. It was the power of the Israelites to conquer in battle. Before it idols were thrown down, and for rashly looking into it thousands perished. Never in our world has the Lord given such open manifestations of his supremacy as when he alone was the acknowledged king of Israel. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 9}

How wise was the arrangement of God to preserve a knowledge of himself in the earth by giving man his holy law, which was the foundation of his government in heaven and in earth, and by connecting with it a system of worship that would be a continual reminder of a coming Saviour. While darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord had a humble few who acknowledged his sovereignty by respecting and obeying the constitution of his kingdom, the ten commandments. Through the ages of idolatry and apostasy, the promise of a Messiah kept the star of hope shining

in the darkened moral heavens until the time came for Christ to make his first advent. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 10}

In the sacrificial offering on every altar was seen a Redeemer. With the cloud of incense arose from every contrite heart the prayer that God would accept their offerings as showing faith in the coming Saviour. Our Saviour has come and shed his blood as a sacrifice, and now he pleads that blood before his Father in the sanctuary in heaven. It is now, as anciently, only through the merits of that blood that the transgressor of God's law can find pardon. It is by exercising repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 11}

While we rejoice today that our Saviour has come, that the sacrifices of the former dispensation have given place to the perfect offering for sin, we are not excusable in showing contempt for that period. Those who make slurring remarks concerning the old Jewish age, show that they are ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the power of God. Amid the moral darkness of the idolatrous nations of that time are seen burning traces of the great I AM. His goings forth stand registered in the pages of Bible history. What is now needed is divine enlightenment, and a more intelligent knowledge of the wonderful dealings of God with his people anciently. The psalmist exclaims, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God."

Basel, Switzerland. {RH, March 2, 1886 par. 12}

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