July 1, 2017

Prison Ministry

**Story of Redemption** (1947) Chapter **6: Cain and Abel and Their Offerings**

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were very unlike in character. Abel feared God. Cain cherished rebellious feelings and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon Adam and because the ground was cursed for his sin. These brothers had been instructed in regard to the provision made for the salvation of the human race. They were required to carry out a system of humble obedience, showing their reverence for God and their faith and dependence upon the promised Redeemer, by slaying the firstlings of the flock and solemnly presenting them with the blood as a burnt offering to God. This sacrifice would lead them to continually keep in mind their sin and the Redeemer to come, who was to be the great sacrifice for man.

Cain brought his offering unto the Lord with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised Sacrifice. He was unwilling to strictly follow the plan of obedience and procure a lamb and offer it with the fruit of the ground. He merely took of the ground and disregarded the requirement of God. God had made known to Adam that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. Cain was not particular to bring even the best of the fruits. Abel advised his brother not to come before the Lord without the blood of sacrifice. Cain, being the eldest, would not listen to his brother. He despised his counsel, and with doubt and murmuring in regard to the necessity of the ceremonial offerings, he presented his offering. But God did not accept it.

Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat, as God had commanded; and in full faith of the Messiah to come, and with humble reverence, he presented the offering. God had respect unto his offering. A light flashes from heaven and consumes the offering of Abel. Cain sees no manifestation that his is accepted. He is angry with the Lord and with his brother. God condescends to send an angel to Cain to converse with him.

The angel inquires of him the reason of his anger, and informs him that if he does well and follows the directions God has given, He will accept him and respect his offering. But if he will not humbly submit to God's arrangements, and believe and obey Him, He cannot accept his offering. The angel tells Cain that it was no injustice on the part of God, or partiality shown to Abel, but that it was on account of his own sin and disobedience of God's express command that He could not respect his offering--and if he would do well he would be accepted of God, and his brother should listen to him, and he should take the lead, because he was the eldest.

But even after being thus faithfully instructed, Cain did not repent. Instead of censuring and abhorring himself for his unbelief, he still complains of the injustice and partiality of God. And in his jealousy and hatred he contends with Abel and reproaches him. Abel meekly points out his brother's error and shows him that the wrong is in himself. But Cain hates his brother from the moment that God manifests to him the tokens of His acceptance. His brother Abel seeks to appease his wrath by contending for the compassion of God in saving the lives of their parents when He might have brought upon them immediate death. He tells Cain that God loves them, or He would not have given His Son, innocent and holy, to suffer the wrath which man, by his disobedience, deserves to suffer.

**The Beginnings of Death**

While Abel justifies the plan of God, Cain becomes enraged, and his anger increases and burns against Abel until in his rage he slays him. God inquires of Cain for his brother, and Cain utters a guilty falsehood: "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" God informs Cain that He knew in regard to his sin--that He was acquainted with his every act, and even the thoughts of his heart, and says to him, "Thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

The curse upon the ground at first had been felt but lightly; but now a double curse rested upon it. Cain and Abel represent the two classes, the righteous and the wicked, the believers and unbelievers, which should exist from the fall of man to the second coming of Christ. Cain's slaying his brother Abel represents the wicked who will be envious of the righteous and will hate them because they are better than themselves. They will be jealous of the righteous and will persecute and put them to death because their right-doing condemns their sinful course.

Adam's life was one of sorrow, humility, and continual repentance. As he taught his children and grandchildren the fear of the Lord, he was often bitterly reproached for his sin which resulted in so much misery upon his posterity. When he left the beautiful Eden, the thought that he must die thrilled him with horror. He looked upon death as a dreadful calamity. He was first made acquainted with the dreadful reality of death in the human family by his own son Cain slaying his brother Abel. Filled with the bitterest remorse for his own transgression, and deprived of his son Abel, and looking upon Cain as his murderer, and knowing the curse God pronounced upon him, bowed down Adam's heart with grief. Most bitterly did he reproach himself for his first great transgression. He entreated pardon from God through the promised Sacrifice. Deeply had he felt the wrath of God for his crime committed in Paradise. He witnessed the general corruption which afterward finally provoked God to destroy the inhabitants of the earth by a flood. The sentence of death pronounced upon him by his Maker, which at first appeared so terrible to him, after he had lived some hundreds of years, looked just and merciful in God, to bring to an end a miserable life.

As Adam witnessed the first signs of decaying nature in the falling leaf and in the drooping flowers, he mourned more deeply than men now mourn over their dead. The drooping flowers were not so deep a cause of grief, because more tender and delicate; but the tall, noble, sturdy trees to cast off their leaves, to decay, presented before him the general dissolution of beautiful nature, which God had created for the special benefit of man.

To his children and to their children, to the ninth generation, he delineated the perfections of his Eden home, and also his fall and its dreadful results, and the load of grief brought upon him on account of the rupture in his family which ended in the death of Abel. He related to them the sufferings God had brought him through to teach him the necessity of strictly adhering to His law. He declared to them that sin would be punished in whatever form it existed. He entreated them to obey God, who would deal mercifully with them if they should love and fear Him.

Angels held communication with Adam after his fall, and informed him of the plan of salvation, and that the human race was not beyond redemption. Although fearful separation had taken place between God and man, yet provision had been made through the offering of His beloved Son by which man might be saved. But their only hope was through a life of humble repentance and faith in the provision made. All those who could thus accept Christ as their only Saviour, should be again brought into favor with God through the merits of His Son.

**Story of Redemption** (1947) Chapter **7: Seth and Enoch**

Seth was a worthy character, and was to take the place of Abel in right doing. Yet he was a son of Adam, like sinful Cain, and inherited from the nature of Adam no more natural goodness than did Cain. He was born in sin, but by the grace of God, in receiving the faithful instructions of his father Adam, he honored God in doing His will. He separated himself from the corrupt descendants of Cain and labored, as Abel would have done had he lived, to turn the minds of sinful men to revere and obey God.

Enoch was a holy man. He served God with singleness of heart. He realized the corruptions of the human family and separated himself from the descendants of Cain and reproved them for their great wickedness. There were those upon the earth who acknowledged God, who feared and worshiped Him. Yet righteous Enoch was so distressed with the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, that he would not daily associate with them, fearing that he should be affected by their infidelity and that his thoughts might not ever regard God with that holy reverence which was due His exalted character. His soul was vexed as he daily witnessed their trampling upon the authority of God. He chose to be separate from them, and spent much of his time in solitude, which he devoted to reflection and prayer. He waited before God and prayed to know His will more perfectly, that he might perform it. God communed with Enoch through His angels and gave him divine instruction. He made known to him that He would not always bear with man in his rebellion--that His purpose was to destroy the sinful race by bringing a flood of waters upon the earth.

The pure and lovely Garden of Eden, from which our first parents were driven, remained until God purposed to destroy the earth by a flood. God had planted that garden and specially blessed it, and in His wonderful providence He withdrew it from the earth, and will return it to the earth again more gloriously adorned than before it was removed from the earth. God purposed to preserve a specimen of His perfect work of creation free from the curse wherewith He had cursed the earth.

The Lord opened more fully to Enoch the plan of salvation, and by the Spirit of prophecy carried him down through the generations which should live after the Flood, and showed him the great events connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. (Jude 14.)

Enoch was troubled in regard to the dead. It seemed to him that the righteous and the wicked would go to the dust together, and that would be their end. He could not clearly see the life of the just beyond the grave. In prophetic vision he was instructed in regard to the Son of God, who was to die man's sacrifice, and was shown the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, attended by the angelic host, to give life to the righteous dead and ransom them from their graves. He also saw the corrupt state of the world at the time when Christ should appear the second time--that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation arrayed in rebellion against the law of God and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and trampling upon His blood and despising His atonement. He saw the righteous crowned with glory and honor while the wicked were separated from the presence of the Lord and consumed with fire.

Enoch faithfully rehearsed to the people all that God had revealed to him by the Spirit of prophecy. Some believed his words and turned from their wickedness to fear and worship God.

**Enoch Translated**

Enoch continued to grow more heavenly while communing with God. His face was radiant with a holy light which would remain upon his countenance while instructing those who would hear his words of wisdom. His heavenly and dignified appearance struck the people with awe. The Lord loved Enoch because he steadfastly followed Him and abhorred iniquity and earnestly sought heavenly knowledge, that he might do His will perfectly. He yearned to unite himself still more closely to God, whom he feared, reverenced, and adored. God would not permit Enoch to die as other men, but sent His angels to take him to heaven without seeing death. In the presence of the righteous and the wicked, Enoch was removed from them. Those who loved him thought that God might have left him in some of his places of retirement, but after seeking him diligently, and being unable to find him, reported that he was not, for God took him.

The Lord here teaches a lesson of the greatest importance by the translation of Enoch, a descendant of fallen Adam, that all would be rewarded, who by faith would rely upon the promised Sacrifice and faithfully obey His commandments. Two classes are here again represented which were to exist until the second coming of Christ--the righteous and the wicked, the rebellious and the loyal. God will remember the righteous, who fear Him. On account of His dear Son He will respect and honor them and give them everlasting life. But the wicked, who trample upon His authority, He will cut off and destroy from the earth, and they will be as though they had not been.

After Adam's fall from a state of perfect happiness to a state of misery and sin, there was danger of man's becoming discouraged and inquiring, "What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord" (Malachi 3:14), since a heavy curse is resting upon the human race, and death is the portion of us all? But the instructions which God gave to Adam, and which were repeated by Seth and fully exemplified by Enoch, cleared away the darkness and gloom, and gave hope to man, that as through Adam came death, through Jesus, the promised Redeemer, would come life and immortality.

In the case of Enoch the desponding faithful were taught that, although living among a corrupt and sinful people, who were in open and daring rebellion against God, their Creator, yet if they would obey Him and have faith in the promised Redeemer, they could work righteousness like the faithful Enoch, be accepted of God, and finally exalted to His heavenly throne.

Enoch, separating himself from the world, and spending much of his time in prayer and in communion with God, represents God's loyal people in the last days, who will be separate from the world. Unrighteousness will prevail to a dreadful extent upon the earth. Men will give themselves up to follow every imagination of their corrupt hearts and carry out their deceptive philosophy and rebel against the authority of high heaven.

God's people will separate themselves from the unrighteous practices of those around them and will seek for purity of thought and holy conformity to His will until His divine image will be reflected in them. Like Enoch, they will be fitting for translation to heaven. While they endeavor to instruct and warn the world, they will not conform to the spirit and customs of unbelievers but will condemn them by their holy conversation and godly example. Enoch's translation to heaven just before the destruction of the world by a flood represents the translation of all the living righteous from the earth previous to its destruction by fire. The saints will be glorified in the presence of those who have hated them for their loyal obedience to God's righteous commandments. {SR 61.1}

Next Mailing: Story of Redemption Chapter **8: The Flood**