

## **We cannot speak of God's person and works in greater detail than He does**

When Moses asked to see God's glory, the Lord's response was "*You cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live,*" (Ex. 33:20). In our sinful state, we cannot see God in His unveiled glory, nor can we comprehend His ways. Paul said of his knowledge of God, "*Now I know in part,*" (1 Cor. 13:12). In heaven, this will change. We have the assurance of the psalmist that in heaven, "*I - in righteousness I will see Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness,*" (Ps. 17:15). We also have the assurance of Paul, "*Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known,*" (1 Cor. 13:12). But in this life, we only know in part.

God has given us a revelation of Himself in the Bible. There He tells us who He is and what He has done to save us. The Bible is sufficient for our salvation. However, this revelation is not a full disclosure of God. There are many things that remain hidden within the Godhead, things God has chosen not to reveal to us. When we are troubled by questions about these matters, we will follow the principle not to speak of God's person and works in greater detail than He does. In other words, we dare not try to read the mind of God. Rather, in faith, we will simply accept what God does say and not try to supplement His Word with our own speculations. The more we search God's revelation, the more we become aware of how little we do know and understand about God. This is why our faith will always rest on Christ. Through Him we have absolute proof that God loves us and has saved us from our sins.

We must constantly fight the tendency to say more than God says in His Word. We have many questions about the how and why of God's creation of the world. However, we will hold to what God has said and refrain from attempting to add to God's revelation by our philosophical or scientific speculations. The same thing is true of the problem of evil in this world. This problem has challenged people of all ages. There are many who have said, "If God is all powerful and loving, then why does evil exist in this world? If God is powerful, He could stop evil from happening. If God is love, He wouldn't allow evil to exist." Therefore, these people deny the existence of an all-powerful and loving God because of the existence of evil.

To answer the question of why there is evil, some have suggested that evil has existed from eternity as a personal principle alongside the personal principle of good (as Manichaeism taught in the 3rd century A.D.). Yet the Bible tells us that only God is eternal, and evil came into this world when Satan and mankind disobeyed God. Others have suggested that evil does not exist, that it is only a figment of our imagination (Christian Science). However, this view runs headlong into the reality of the troubles of this world and cannot even withstand the scrutiny of human logic

Why did God not stop the devil from falling into sin? Why didn't He annihilate the devil when he fell? Why did God permit Adam and Eve to fall into sin? Why didn't He get rid of Adam and Eve when they fell into sin? Why didn't He start all over again by creating a new human race? God has not answered these questions for us. Some have suggested that God didn't want robots, that He

wanted mankind to love Him freely. Thus, they say He made it possible for mankind to sin. However, this answer, again, is human speculation. Finally, God permitted the fall into sin. He did not stop it. He allowed sin's consequences to corrupt His good creation. We can answer the questions of *what* happened. God has not given us the answer of *why* things happened the way they did.

The questions of "Why, Lord? Why do You permit this trouble to come on me?" have troubled many Christians. Mary and Martha both asked Jesus, "Why, Lord," when their brother Lazarus died (John 11:21-32). Job struggled with the question of why the Lord permitted such suffering to come on him (Job 31:35). Even our Lord on the cross cried out, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matt. 27:46). God doesn't always give us an answer as to why. He does, however, give us His promises on which we can rest our faith. He assures us, in many places in the Bible, of His unchanging, unfailing mercy and love. When confronted with the question of why, we do well to flee to Christ, our loving Saviour. There we will find peace and strength to trust God, even when our senses may lead us to assume that He has forsaken us. In Christ we find the assurance "*that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose,*" (Rom. 8:28).

The hymnist Salomo Franck (d. 1725) put it well when he wrote:

I leave all things to God's direction;  
He loves me both in wealth and woe.  
His will is good, sure his affection;  
His tender love is true, I know.  
My fortress and my rock is He:  
What pleases God, that pleases me.

(Christian Worship [CW] 414:1)