

THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

All studies of the Kingdom of Heaven must begin with the King Himself. No kingdom is greater than its king, nor more wise or powerful than the one who is best qualified to rule it. The Bible tells us about this King, the greatest Ruler of all, the King of all Kings. If we study it carefully what does it tell us about this Creator-God of all men?

Introducing the King of all Kings

The Ultimate Reality that lies behind our universe is a fellowship of three Divine Personalities that the Bible calls the Godhead (Acts 17:29). These three Persons have always existed unmade, uncreated and uncaused. This total Reality we call "God" are shown to be distinct and different from each other, and are called in the Bible the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Bible God is revealed as three Personalities, able to love each other and talk with each other. They have been together before time began, always in harmony and unselfishness. (Eph. 4:4-6; Gen. 1:1, 2, 26, 3:22; 11:7; 19:24; Dan. 9:17; Zech. 10:12; 2:8,9; Ps. 45:7; Isa. 48:16; Num. 6:24-26; Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Ps. 72:1, 89:27; Lk. 3:21-22; Matt. 28:19; Jn. 14:23, 16-17; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14.)

This fellowship of Divine Persons are one in substance, essence, and nature. They are co-equal in power, in being, and in love; whenever the Bible refers to the Reality we call God, it refers to unity of three personalities. This concept is hard to see at first, but it could be illustrated by a simple mathematical formula:

$$1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$$

In this formula, there are three distinct, though interdependent entities, three "ones". Considered on the left hand side of the equation, there are three, considered on the right side, they equal one. In this formula, not one of the entities can be left out without changing the whole. In other words:

$$1 \times 1 \times 0 = 0$$

Think about one simple idea, like time. It consists of three interdependent, though distinct and different entities:

$$\text{Past} \times \text{Present} \times \text{Future} = \text{Time}$$

Past is not Present nor Future, but Past is Time.

Future is Time.

Present is Time.

We can say that in essence, or in nature, Past, Present and Future are all "Time", but they are not each other. There are many such illustrations of this scattered right through all of nature. God too, is like this. Each member of the Godhead is different and distinct from the other, but they are not separate nor independent, and they are all one in nature and substance. This oneness is emphasized right through the Bible. (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Sam. 7:22; 22:32; Deut. 32:39; Ps 86:10; 35:10; Isa. 27:16, 20; 40:18; 43:10, 46:9; Mic. 7:18; Isa. 45:5, 6, 14, 22; Hos. 13:4; Jer. 10:6, 7, 10; Ex. 8:10; Jn. 10:30; 17:21-23.)

The King's Natural Abilities

God is not matter/energy, but Spirit. The Godhead are in their essential nature non-physical, the Ultimate Reality beyond energy and matter. All truth is centered in God's own being; this is the final cause behind the created universe. (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 100:5; Jer. 4:2; Zech. 8:8; 1 Jn. 5:6). He cannot be discovered by unaided human research, (Job 11:7-8; Isa. 45:15) but has promised to reveal Himself under certain conditions. (Isa. 59:1-5; 55:6-7; Heb. 11:6). No member of the Godhead will reveal Himself to man unless that man can be trusted with the truth he is given. (Lk. 10:21-22; Deut. 29:9; Prov. 1:23; Isa. 45:3; Matt. 18:3; Jn. 12:36-40). God is the "invisible God" (Col. 1:15; Jn. 4:24, Ex. 20:4; Jn. 1:18; 1 Tim. 1:17). Thus, no man can "by searching" find out God; He must reveal Himself to us, and has.

The Godhead live in eternal time. Because God is uncreated (no-one or nothing else made Him), He is self-existent; no-one or nothing else keeps Him. God depends on no other source than His own limitless energies to exist, but the upkeep of the entire created universe depends on His care! He holds together the very fabric of space, time, energy that we are a part of, if He withdrew His upholding power from creation it would fall apart; it would "uncreate" into nothingness! (Jn. 1:1-3; Heb. 11:3 Col. 1:16-17). Because the Godhead have no beginning, they are able to experience succession of time without limit; God has always, and will always live forever. (Ps. 90:2; Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Ps. 9:7; Ps. 41:13; 93:2; 103:17; Isa. 24:6; 40:28; 44:6; 48:12; Rom. 1:20; 16:26; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 4:8). He is able to make decisions in time without the finite limitations of His creation: (Gen. 6:5-7; Ps. 102:24-27; Ex. 2:23-25; Num. 11:1-2; Deut. 2:25; 11:12; Josh. 10:14; 2 Kings 13:3-4; 2 Chron. 7:12-16; Ps. 95:10-11; Isa. 12:1; Jer. 44:21-22; Ezek. 16:42; Zech. 1:12-16).

God has all the elements of personality. Because we are made in His image we too have real personalities, and are not just machines. The Bible shows us that God has a mind and thinks. (1 Sam. 2:35, Isa. 1:18; 41:21; 55:8-9; Jer. 29:11; Ex. 32:7-14; 2 Kings 19:14-28; Jer. 2:1-13; Mic. 6:1-3) He has real emotions, and feels. (Gen. 6:5-6; 2 Chron. 16:9; Ps. 78:38, 78:58-61; 95:10-11; Isa. 12:1; Ezek. 6:9-10; Mic. 7:18-19; Zeph. 3:17; Zech. 1:14-16; Matt. 18:23; 18:27, 34-35; 23:37; Lk. 15:7,10; Jn. 4:23; Rev. 3:20) and He has the power to create choice without anything or anyone behind His choice directing it. (Gen. 1:26, 3:22-24; 6:6; 6:12-13; 9:11-12; Ex. 32:7-14, 30-33; 2 Kings 20:5-6; Isa. 12:1; Acts 1:7) God made us in finite, miniature likeness to His own great Being. When we think, feel or choose, we can understand just a tiny part of the way that God feels or thinks or chooses because He has made us like Him in these abilities. When we see in the Bible that God is hurt or happy, we can feel in a tiny, finite scale, what God must feel like on an infinite scale when we also experience grief or joy. God is not alien to ourselves, but far greater.

The Godhead have unspeakably great powers, and have always had them. Because the nature of God is profoundly wonderful, there are many things that He can do that would be quite impossible to us, His loved creation. He has the power to be present in all places of His Creation at once; it is, indeed, the very energies of His infinite Being that hold that creation together. He fills all the universe without limit to His extension or compass. (Jer. 23:24; Ps. 139:7-10; Prov. 15:3; 1 Kings 8:22-24, 27; Isa. 57:15; Acts 17:24, 27-28; Eph. 4:6; Heb. 4:13) He has complete knowledge of all knowable things, both actual and pos-

sible. (Job 27:16; Ps. 147:5; Isa. 40:28; Rom. 11:33; 1 Jn. 3:20) His knowledge is infinite, or without measure. He also has no limits to His energy or power of personality; He has the power to do all that which is practically or morally possible. (Gen. 17:1; Ex.6:1-3, 6-7; Job.33:4; Ps.91:1; Ezek.10:4-5; Joel 1:14-15; 2 Cor.6:16-18; Rev.1:8; 4:8; 11:15-17; 21:22). All these things are naturally true about God. He did not choose to have them; they are inherently true about Him. What He does with these powers is, however, under His control.

All these qualities of God's Being do not tell us what kind of person He is. They are not moral in character; they do not reveal to us what use God has made of His powers. We can call these His "attributes of Being", or descriptions of what is true about God's wonderful Being. These are natural attributes of God; they inherently belong to His nature. What is even more wonderful about God is what the Bible tells us He has done with all these involuntary powers. The next class of Bible descriptions really reveal just how loving and great this Creator is. They tell us what God has CHOSEN to be like, what He has volunteered to do with His mighty energies, and we can call them His MORAL attributes. They are not fixed, static things, but God's personality in action; they are the results of the Godhead's intelligent and wise choices; they are the active decisions of His will. They do not flow uncreated out of His Being like His natural attributes, but are made by the choices of His personality. Nothing MAKES God act like the Bible reveals He does; these are the things He has actually chosen to do with the vast array of powers that He has.

The King's Moral Abilities

God is MORAL, and has moral abilities. When we say a person is "moral" we imply that they have at least four qualities; a mind, with the ability to think; feelings, and the ability to experience; a will, with the creative ability to determine their own decisions and choices; and lastly, the ability to both possess and understand what is both true and valuable. If a person has these abilities, and by a wise use of these powers conforms his or her life to that which is truly seen to be the most valuable possible decision, we can call that person "good". If, on the other hand, they refuse to live intelligently, and choose instead something less valuable or more harmful, we can label their action or choice "bad". Now God is a moral Being and the Bible tells us some of the beautiful aspects of His character:

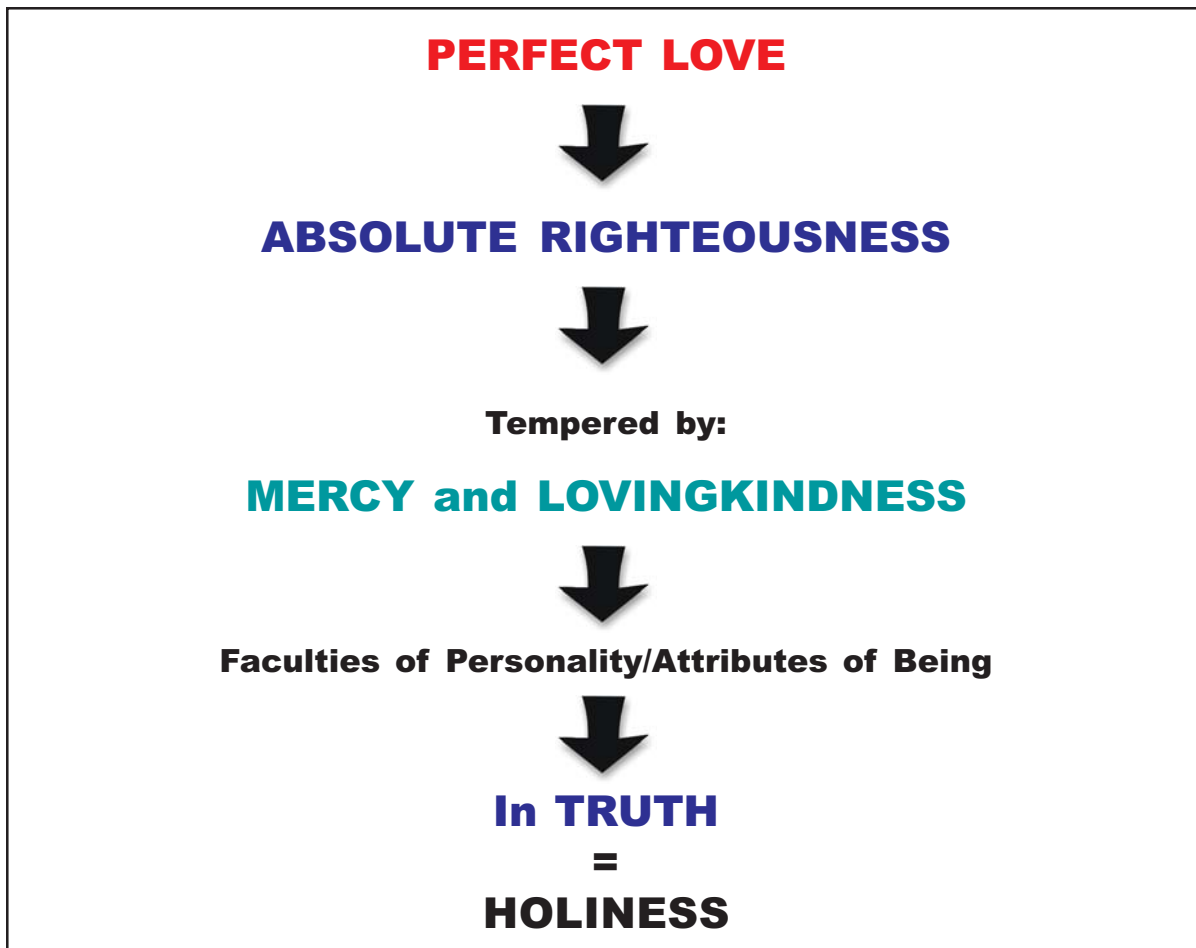
- The basic distinguishing mark of the Godhead's moral character is the word **LOVE**. This is the basic way He acts; this sums up His every action, and it is the reason behind His every decision. (1 Jn. 4:8,16). Now Biblical love, God's kind of love is not just a feeling. It is basically an attitude of will to show kindness and care to others as directed by true and perfect intelligence. It is an unselfish choice for the highest good of all persons and all things. The entire Godhead have forever chosen to be directed by love: they fulfill all that they know they could and should do without showing favorites to anyone outside the law of absolute wisdom. This is the most profound revelation of the Scriptures. God IS love! (Deut. 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 7:8; 15:16; 23:5; 30:20; 2 Chron. 2:11; 9:8; Isa. 63:9; Jer. 31:3; Ezk. 16:8; Hos. 3:1; Zeph. 3:17; Jn. 3:16; 3:35; 8:42; 13:35; 15:10; 17:26; 17:24-26; Rom. 5:5, 8; 8:39; 2 Cor. 5:14; 6:6; Eph. 2:4; 3:19; 5:2; 6:23; 2 Thess. 3:5; Gal. 2:20; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Jn. 3:1; 4:7; 1 Jn. 5:3; 4:16; 4:8; 4:10; 4:20; 5:1; Rev. 1:5). Everything God does flows from love.
- Because God is love, and God is the measure of perfectly intelligent conduct, God's

own manner of living is the standard by which all moral beings may measure their lives. To conform to what is true in one's relationships, or to live up to what you know to be right, is called "light" in the Bible. God *is* **LIGHT**, because He lives in perfect accordance to what absolute intelligence can see is most wise; He is "in the light", or doing every thing that He knows He ought to do. (I Jn. 1:7). To be "in the light" is to do what God shows us to do when He reveals to us what the way of wise conduct is, and this is true living. (Jn. 8:12; 12:35-36; 3:19-21; Ps. 119:130; 27:1; 36:9; 43:3; 112:4; Isa. 2:5; 9:2; 60:3; 60:20, Dan. 5:11,14; Matt. 4:16; 5:14-16; Lk. 11:34; Jn. 1:9; 9:5; 5:35; 12:36; Eph. 5:8-13; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Tim 6:16; Jas. 1:17; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 1:5-7; 2:10; Rev. 22:5). This is why God asks us to do what is most wise; He Himself has done it first. He has set us the ultimate example He has not asked us to do anything that He Himself has not been willing to do.

- Think about these two marvelous preceding attributes, or things that are true, of God. How moved our hearts ought to be to worship and love Him! The Bible tells us that God is *HOLY*; this sums up His love and His light, and means that out of His love, God has freely chosen to live in full accord with truth and to accurately channel His energies of Being to help His world according to their true values. (Lev. 11:44, Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:8) God deals rightly with every moral being; this is called *RIGHTEOUSNESS*, and means that God will treat all men in the most just, wise and merciful way He can find possible. (Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4; Job 36:1-2; Ps. 11:7; Dan. 9:7,14; Hos. 14:9; Jn. 17:25; Rom. 14:17; Heb. 1:8-9; Rev. 15:3). God must be strictly fair, and render to every man according to his deeds. (Rom. 2:6, 11). He is strictly impartial, never prejudiced, completely just.
- **MERCY** and loving-kindness is another profound moral attribute of the Godhead. The Bible is filled with passages that describe God as compassionate, forbearing, forgiving, gracious kind, patient, long-suffering and merciful. God's heart is tender; He finds great joy in being able to pardon a rebellious rebel out of His love. He has not only stooped to our smallness, but to our guilt and defilement. No one in the universe has as much vulnerability to being morally hurt as God; no one else has invested so much in our well-being and happiness, and no one else cares so much about us, and wants to see us happy. Imagine how greatly God has been grieved and hurt by His creation, man! We are hurt in direct proportion to how well we know and love (and invest trust in) the person who fails us. No one knows us better than God and no one has trusted us more than He has. When we hurt God, we have the power to hurt Him more than any other Being in the universe. (Ps. 51:1; 78:38; 86:15; Lk. 1:78; Phil. 1:8; Matt. 9:36; (Jn. 1:18); Eph. 4:32; Jas. 5:11; Lk. 9:41; Rom. 2:4; Nahum 1:3; Ex. 32:32-33; Jer. 36:3, Ex. 20:7, Ps. 40:13, Lev. 10:17; 17:11; Isa. 38:17; Jer. 31:34; Matt. 6:12; Lk. 6:37; Rom. 3:25; Acts 3:19; Jonah 4:2; Heb. 10:29; Prov. 28:13; Luke 6:35; Rom. 12:1, Gen. 6:3; 2 Thess. 3:5; 2 Pet. 3:9; 2 Sam. 22:26; 2 Cor. 4:1; Isa. 63:7).
- **WISDOM** also characterizes God's moral Being, which is the loving, intelligent use of His powers. Divine wisdom is the net product of God's love, knowledge and creative energies. It is the composite thrust of His loving purpose, His thinking ability of design, His emotional ability guiding and evaluating, and His incredible energy to

carry things out. (Rom. 11:33; Ps. 104:24; 136:1-9; Prov. 3:19; Jer. 51:15; I Cor. 2:7 (1-10); Eph. 3:10; Col. 2:3).

- God is perfectly **TRUTHFUL**, truly trustworthy in all His dealings with us. All that He says and does is the sum of absolute righteousness, perfect wisdom and total unselfishness. God “cannot lie” or commit any act of selfishness, because only He really sees the stupid and harmful consequences any act of sin brings into the universe, and He has never made an unwise choice. We can trust what God has given us in His Word and through His Son; we can do it with absolute confidence, because it is the truth of the Living God Himself. (Ex. 34:6; Ps. 25:10; Isa. 65:16; Jn. 14:6, 17; 17:3, 17; 1 Thess. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 2:2).
- **FAITHFULNESS** or unchangeableness is that attribute of God that tells us that all the members of the Godhead have, and always will unselfishly choose the highest good of all moral beings. God is love, has always been love, and will always be love. God is absolute in His stability, He has promised that He will always act the way He acts now. We can have full confidence that God will always be just, always be merciful when possible, always be perfectly wise in all actions and always be perfectly truthful. (Deut. 7:9; Ps. 102:25-27; Lam. 3:23; Mal. 3:6; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 13:8; Jas. 1:17, 1 Pet. 4:19, Rev. 1:5-6). What a thrilling Person God is! How much men should praise Him for all that He is!



SUMMARY: We can say that **PERFECT LOVE** must treat all creatures in **ABSOLUTE RIGHTEOUSNESS**, which will be tempered by **MERCY** and **LOVINGKINDNESS** (as long as righteousness is not sacrificed by such a tempering). This love will use the **WISDOM** of God's faculties and endowments, in absolute **TRUTH**, and this whole expression is called God's **HOLINESS**. This is the way God wants us to live. (1 Pet. 1:15-16)

The Kingdom Of the King

God is the KING of all the universe. His kingdom is His whole creation, and like all kingdoms it is controlled or directed by laws. In God's universal rule, He uses two great modes of control. One set of controls is *physical* and operates by the law of cause and effect, with God providing adequate causes for every resultant effect; the other set of laws is *moral*, and operates by moral motives, or appeals to intelligent free action. These two sets of controls are the basic directives of God's universe. They are both laws, but differ in that physical laws are rules *of* action, or ways in which a things always *does* behave and moral laws are rules *for* action, or ways in which moral beings *ought* to behave. The first set of laws are *force* laws, and operate by physical energies; the other are laws designed to govern *free will*, and operate by mental and moral light to beings who are able to weigh intelligently the issues at stake and decide creatively on that basis. (Ps. 22:28; Dan 2:42, 44; 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21; 7:22, 27; I Chron. 17:14; 28:5, Ps. 103:19, 145:11, 145:13; Matt. 4:8, 17, 23; 5:3, 6:10, 33; 8:11; 9:35; 11:11, 12; 12:28; 13:19; 16:28; 19:23; 24:14; 25:34; Mark 4:11; 12:34; 14:25; Luke 8:10; 9:2; 9:62; 10:9,11; 12:32; 13:29; 16:16; John 3:3, 5; 18:36; Acts 8:12; 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28; 23; 28:31; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 1 Thess. 2:2; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 12:10).

How did our "natural laws" originate? When time itself began, God was already there, making it all happen. He said, "Let there be light!" and power beyond imagination exploded into reality, fiery energies spun into being, in atomic chains. Undreamed of forces molded matter into actuality, and creation began. God set up forces, forces of incredible precision to guide His new universe. We call them the "laws of science" and their awesome testimony to God's wisdom is studied in the laboratories of the world. The Bible reveals to us this in verses like: (1 Chron. 29:11-12; Job 37-38 and Isa. 45:5,7, 12.)

God made a special world. There were already billions in His universe, but this tiny, blue-green planet was to be very special in His eyes. God called His new and beautiful little world Earth. (Gen. 1:1-10; Isa. 45:18; Ex. 19:6; Ps. 24:1). God upholds and controls His own vast creation with perfect direction and wisdom according to His own great love and care. We do not invent the laws of science with their marvelous accuracy and precision; we can simply discover them. God's force laws do not change; they are steady, and behave with consistency. Because they do not alter, we can build concepts of reality from them, or extend our knowledge of the universe by studying how they behave, and carrying our thoughts further, knowing that a thinking, logical Person constructed them according to patterns. The Bible shows us God alone is the Upholder of the universe. (Gen. 6:7,13; 9:11; 19:24, 25; Ex. 14:21-29; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chron. 29:10-12; 2 Chron. 7:12-14; Ps. 50:1; 62:11; 93:1-4; 135:5-9; Dan. 4:34, 35; Jonah 1:4, 14, 15; Matt. 5:45; 8:24-27; 24:29, 30; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 11:17; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:1-4, 8, 12; Rev. 16:18,21). The science laws are all *force* laws.

God gave Earth *life*, filling it with plants, fishes and birds; He made the insects and the animal kingdom, an astonishing display of His love and wisdom. To these creatures He gave built-in control systems, all geared to signals from the world around them. Each tiny creature without ability of mind was carefully programmed to carry out its tasks without mistake or error, from generation to generation; each performs complex actions in a mindless testimony to the Genius who built them. We call these guiding forces "laws of *instinct*"

and see them operate right through the whole animal creation, in all creatures that were created without moral ability, but are able to grow and move themselves around. The Bible shows that God has not only designed these force laws in the animate world, but actually directs these creatures at times by Divine impulse to help us wake up and see His protection and wisdom in His creation. Many of these creatures mindlessly accomplish feats that were humanly impossible or unknown before the last century, without mistake. How wonderfully God has programmed them, and how much glory they give Him in life! (Gen. 9:2, Num. 11:31; 22:22, 23; Deut. 32:11,12; I Kings 17:4,6; Job 35:10,11; Ps. 104:16-18; Dan. 6:22, 24; Jonah 1:17; 2:10; Matt. 6:26; 8:20; 10:29; 17:27, 23:37; 26:74,75; Mk. 5:11-13)

Then God was ready to crown His creation with His most wonderful work. No one knew the love that existed in the fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There was no one like Them in the whole universe; no one else had experienced moral happiness. The whole beautiful creation was waiting for another creature who could share something with God. And so the Godhead decided to extend their love. They said, "Let us make man in our image". (Gen. 1:26). Mankind was formed from the elements of the dust in supernatural creation, in finite miniature likeness to God Himself. The first lovely pair of human people were created to begin a race destined for greatness as a part of God's very own life and family! Man was made a beautiful being, perfect in every respect.

For His ultimate creation, God made a special set of directives. Because we are made in finite, miniature likeness to Him, we are able to choose; free to do right or wrong. God gave us another set of rules to govern our free-will decisions. They are rules *for* action that will be presently shown to be perfectly suited to our moral nature. These laws have their foundation in the one great law by which all moral decisions are measured, the wonderful law called *love*, by which God Himself gauges all of His own moral decisions.

How these laws function, and what the foundation of value and right is, we must make the subject of separate study. But it is necessary in passing, to mention the one special control that involves force in a moral creation. This is His emergency control. It has been necessary to bring this into effect since the fall of mankind. Here, God can specially over-rule man's free will in emergencies to accomplish His purposes. The Bible calls it "hardening the heart". (Ex. 11:9-10; Duet. 2:25; Josh. 11:20; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Ps. 22:28; 66:7; Prov. 21:1; Jer. 32:27-30; 50:9; Dan. 4:17, 32; Zeph. 3:8; Jn. 7:30; 18:31-32; 19:9-11, Rom. 13:1; Rev. 17:17). In such "will-freezes" God does not hold men responsible; His judgments only apply to men's free choices. The will-freeze is used to govern, or to fulfill some of His prophecies. It is His special measure that ensures a complete control over the affairs of history so it will not get out of hand, and guards His universe from harm.