

God's Methods

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Healing Substitution Model: While Satan loves to use lies and force to advance his agenda (John 8:44; Job 1 & 2), God's uses truth, love, freedom, evidence, reason, openness, and humility. God does not use His power to coerce because the things that God really wants – trust and love – cannot be compelled. These things cannot be commanded but can only exist in an atmosphere of genuine freedom. While there have been times that God has acted forcefully in cases of emergency in order to preserve a knowledge of who He is, these methods were never His first choice. And God has never tried to force an individual to love Him.

Penal Substitution Model: God uses power to inflict penalties upon the disobedient and therefore coerces people with threats and inflicted pain and suffering ultimately inflicting the penalty for sin – eternal death. This view is a violation of God's law and it destroys love and incites fear.

Documentation for HSM:

God is love. 1John 4:8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1Corinthians 13:4-7

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:23,24

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. John 14:16,17

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. Isaiah 1:18

Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. Romans 14:5

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:14

You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. John 8:32

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5-8

Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:4

'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. Zechariah 4:6

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love;** and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

Satan's representations against the government of God, and his defense of those who sided with him, were a constant accusation against God. His murmurings and complaints were groundless; and yet God allowed him to work out his theory. God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. **All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line. He would not give the slightest encouragement for any human being to set himself up as God over another human being, feeling at liberty to cause him physical or mental suffering. This principle is wholly of Satan's creation. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 7}**

The principles of the character of God were the foundation of the education constantly kept before the heavenly angels. **These principles were goodness, mercy, and love.** Self-evidencing light was to be recognized and freely accepted by all who occupied positions of trust and power. They must accept God's principles, and, through the **presentation of truth and**

righteousness, convince all who were in his service. This was the only power to be used. Force must never come in. All who thought that their position gave them power to command their fellow beings, and control conscience, must be deprived of their position; for this is not God's plan. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 8}

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. **This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened.** To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Mal. 4:2. {DA 22.1}

These principles are to be the foundation of education in God's church today. The rules given by him are to be observed and respected. God has enjoined this. His government is moral. **Nothing is to be done by compulsion. Truth is to be the prevailing power.** . All service is to be done willingly, and for the love of God. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 9}...

Today Satan is working upon human minds by his crooked principles. These will be adopted and acted upon by some who claim to be loyal and true to God's government. How shall we know that they are disloyal and untrue?--"By their fruits ye shall know them." **God does not force any one. He leaves all free to choose.** But he says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Lord will not write as wise those who cannot distinguish between a tree that bears thorn-berries and a tree that bears olives. {RH, September 7, 1897 par. 15}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love--homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. **He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.** {GC 493.2}

But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. **God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown.**

Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. {GC 36.1}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, **cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.** {ISM 235.2}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His Word, are **all established by testimony that appeals to our reason;** and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth, will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith." Steps to Christ 105.

He maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, **not because it was supported by His personal testimony,** but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, **presented unquestionable evidence of that truth.** When the object of His labors with the two disciples was gained, He revealed Himself to them, that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight (ST Oct. 6, 1909).

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when **sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course.** {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.--General Conference Daily Bulletin, April 13, 1891.